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DORA WORDSWORTH : HER BOOK.

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II.

THE Wordsworths came to London for the winter of 1830-31, with a stop on the way at Cambridge. The album came with them. I think the first London entry is the one written by the infirm hand of Coleridge at Highgate, on Christmas Eve.

‘Inscription on
a
Time-piece

‘NOW! It is gone.—Our Moments travel post,
Each with it's deed or thought, it's *What?* and *how?*
But, know! each parting Hour gives up a Ghost,
May live within thee, an eternal NOW.

‘S. T. COLERIDGE.’

‘24 Decr. 1830.’

I transcribe it exactly as it is written in the album for comparison with the version in the edition of Coleridge's works published by Moxon in 1854, and edited by Derwent and Sara Coleridge. The changes with respect to capitals are unimportant; but the published version has, in the first line, ‘brief hours’ for ‘Moments’; in the second line, ‘thought or deed’ for ‘deed or thought,’ and ‘Why’ for ‘What’; in the fourth line, ‘To dwell’ for ‘May live.’

I am a little sorry for this entry. Many of those who wrote in Dora's book did so eagerly, spontaneously, dipping the pen with only verbal protestation. Coleridge was hardly of that type. The ‘What’ came only with some effort. His health was below his poor average at this time. Hamilton had been anxious to meet him; to the astronomer Wordsworth writes in January: ‘You are interested about Mr. Coleridge; I saw him several times

lately, and have had long conversations with him. It grieves me to say that his constitution seems much broken up. I have heard that he has been worse since I saw him. His mind has lost none of its vigour, but he is certainly in that state of bodily health that no one who knows him could feel justified in holding out the hope of even an introduction to him, as an inducement for your visiting London.' Coleridge was not in a position to do favours. He could, however, hardly refuse Wordsworth. By himself he could rarely refuse anybody. We have it in Wordsworth's words that 'of all men whom I have ever known, Coleridge had the most of passive courage in bodily peril, but no one was so easily cowed when moral firmness was required in miscellaneous conversation or in the daily intercourse of social life.'

On the left-hand page facing Coleridge's entry is Crabbe's contribution, undated, but probably a little later. The verses, like those of Coleridge, were from memory rather than composed for the occasion. The entry reads:

'Beside the Summer-Sea I stand,
Where the slow Billows swelling shine
How beautiful this pearly Sand,
Be this delicious Quiet mine:

'Beneath this Cliff my sheltered Seat,
To watch th' intangled Weeds ashore
To hear the rippling Waters beat
And dream as I have dreamt before.

'GEO. CRABBE.'

Wordsworth's account of Crabbe, as dictated to Miss Fenwick, is as follows:

'Crabbe I have met in London at Mr. Rogers', but more frequently and favourably at Mr. Hoare's upon Hampstead Heath. Every spring he used to pay that family a visit of some length. . . . Crabbe obviously for the most part preferred the company of women to that of men, for this among other reasons; that he did not like to be put upon the stretch in general conversation: accordingly in miscellaneous society his talk was so much below what might have been expected from a man so deservedly celebrated, that to me it seemed trifling. It must upon other occasions have been of a different character, as I found in our rambles together on Hampstead Heath, and not so much from a readiness to communicate his knowledge of life and manners as of natural history in all its branches. His mind was inquisitive, and he seems to

have taken refuge from the remembrance of the distresses he had gone through, in these studies and the employments to which they led. Moreover, such contemplations might tend profitably to counterbalance the painful truths which he had collected from his intercourse with mankind. Had I been more intimate with him, I should have ventured to touch upon his office as a minister of the Gospel, and how far his heart and soul were in it so as to make him a zealous and diligent labourer: in poetry, though he wrote much as we all know, he assuredly was not so. . . .

Leaving aside the extraneous gossip and questioning, this note strikes truly to the core of Crabbe's old age. 'He seems to have taken refuge from the remembrance of the distresses he had gone through' in just such pictures as that of his verses above. Slaughtermen Quay and the butter barrels that he loathed were long behind him; the pleasure in the sea, and in the 'contracted flora' he had studied carefully, remained. Though as a young man he had hated Aldeburgh with a shrewd and penetrating hate, as an old man in memory he had an inward longing till the last for the shingled beach,

'With all those bright red pebbles, that the sun
Through the small waves so softly shines upon. . . .'

Crabbe died about a year after this entry, at the age of seventy-eight; Coleridge in 1834. Wordsworth linked them with Lamb and Mrs. Hemans in the *Effusion on the Death of James Hogg*.

The next entry is Wordsworth's sonnet beginning *Nuns fret not at their convent's narrow room*, copied in by Joanna Baillie at Hampstead, on December 27. The album seems to have lain dormant after this till March, Wordsworth being away for part of the intervening time at Buxted Rectory, in Sussex. Then R. P. Gillies, a writer 'of versatility and talent, but generally in a hopeless condition of insolvency,' as Mr. Nowell Smith characterises him, opened the series of spring contributions with a *Quatuorain addressed to Willm. Wordsworth Esq^r. referring to a sonnet written by him at Edin^o in 1814*. The sonnet had been an attempt to free Gillies from the 'dark chambers of dejection' by proving that:

'A cheerful life is what the Muses love,
A soaring spirit is their prime delight.'

Gillies's replying verses read :

' Wordsworth ! Since first in scenes now far remote,
 Thy varied eloquence 'twas mine to hear,
 Long years have worn away, and Time has wrought
 Sad change for one whose humble path to cheer,
 Thy voice was kindly raised. But still in thought,
 Those distant scenes their wonted aspect wear,
 With bright autumnal hues to Memory brought,
 And not the less (though in how different sphere !)
 I welcome thee,—rejoicing that by Time
 Not all are doom'd to change,—that even this life
 Gains vernal freshness from thine Art sublime,—
 And mid the crowded haunts of worldly strife,
 Calmly the Poet's mind sustains its flame,—
 Like stars through clouds,—unyielding and the same !
' R. P. GILLIES.'

' London, March 8, 1831.'

Next comes the ever-hospitable Rogers ; to follow Rannie's description, a sympathetic, wealthy, ornate, caustic little man, with bald head and wrinkled face, cadaverous in its paleness ; blue eyes which Carlyle called both ' sorrowful ' and ' cruel ' ; withal a kindness that has made him famous as a host. Rogers had met Wordsworth at Grasmere in 1803, and the friendship kept up, by visits and correspondence, for nearly half a century. Wordsworth notes, in a letter to Professor Reed, that in his visit to London in 1854 he saw more of Rogers, then in his eighty-third year, than of anyone else, save his host, Moxon. Whenever in town Wordsworth was a frequent guest at St. James's Place ; and we may assume the following was signed there :

' Her voice, whate'er she said, enchanted ;
 Like music to the heart it went.
 And her dark eyes—how eloquent ;
 Ask what they would, 't was granted.

' SAM^L. ROGERS.
 ' April 5, 1831.'

I turn back now a few pages for an entry on a left-hand page, unsigned and misdated. It reads :

' Where Wordsworth, Southey, Coleridge write,
 With wisdom, humour, pathos,
 Where Rogers, Crabbe, with fancies bright
 This favoured book array thus,
 How can you bid a nameless Wight
 His dogg'rel to displāy thus ?—

How can you ask the glow-worm's light
 To glimmer in mid-dāy thus?—
 Did ever Mole with all his might
 Rear hills to rival Athos?—
 Yet thus for You, in reason's spite,
 I perpetrate the bathos.'

This is dated March 21, 1831, and incorrectly so. It must have been later—it mentions Rogers's entry—though probably in the same year. The desirability of placing it comes with the suspicion that the 'nameless Wight' is Edward Quillinan. By all the laws of human nature Dora saw Quillinan in London; and we know from one of her letters to Christopher Wordsworth that her father and Quillinan went for a visit at this time to 'a raving admirer' at Brixton Hill. She also intimates that Wordsworth talked much with Quillinan about the Reform Bill, which exercised him greatly. The handwriting confirms the suspicion that the 'You' is from Quillinan to Dora, but we are not quite ready to take up the further relationships of the pair.

So ends the little group of entries during the winter and spring of 1830-31. The Wordsworths, of course, saw many more friends than are here represented. Henry Taylor, in a letter to Miss Fenwick, says:

'I have seen a good deal more of Wordsworth than I ever saw before; I feel as if one could have a great deal of regard for him. I have had three or four breakfasts with him, and he is as agreeable in society as he is admirable in the powers of talking; so perfectly courteous and well-bred and simple in his manners. He met Jeffrey the other day at Sir J. Mackintosh's and at Jeffrey's request they were introduced. Lockhart beheld the ceremony, and told me that W. played the part of a man of the world to perfection, much better than the smaller man, and did not appear to be conscious of anything having taken place between them before.'

In April Lamb was daily expecting a visit; and on the 13th, as we learn from Mr. Lucas, Wordsworth called at Lamb's lodgings and took an excess of sugar. Lamb's contribution to the album, however, was made later.

The family returned to Rydal in the summer. Though John Stuart Mill visited them, and saw a great deal both of Wordsworth and Southey, he did not write in Dora's book. Remembering his conversion in 1828 by means of Wordsworth's poems, an entry from him would have been of interest; but it must be remembered,

from the lines *To the Utilitarians* sent in 1833 to Crabb Robinson, that Wordsworth was not in agreement with the cause Mill championed. That summer is one without much progress for the album; there are two drawings: one a water-colour of Rydal by Westall, the other a pencil sketch of Elleray, Professor Wilson's place on Windermere, by Gibb; but they are overshadowed by the incidents connected with Scott's contribution of his last verses.

* * *

In the autumn of 1831, Wordsworth and Dora started from Rydal Mount to visit Sir Walter Scott before his departure for Italy. They travelled in an open carriage with one horse, driven by Dora, and Wordsworth, who was suffering severely from an inflammation of his eyes, would walk, with a green linen eye-shade, beside the carriage. In a note to Scott dated September 16, 1831, Wordsworth describes the manner of the march. "There's a man wi' a veil, and a lass drivin'," exclaimed a little urchin, as we entered merry Carlisle a couple of hours ago, on our way to Abbotsford.' They both took great delight in the rainbows and the coloured mists floating on the hills; and they cared far more for seeing the country than they did for travelling comforts. I know no record of the luggage taken with them, but I suspect that it was simple. There was included a small packet, nearly square, which indicated that Dora had her album with her.

The last years of Sir Walter Scott, and his terrific struggle to retrieve the bankruptcy caused by Ballantyne's failure, are among the best-known incidents of literary history. I would merely recall that Wordsworth was paying this his final visit as a debt due to twenty-eight years' friendship. The two men had first met in 1803, Wordsworth then travelling with Dorothy. Samuel Rogers and his sister had run across the Wordsworths on that tour, when Coleridge was with them for a time, and they were all, says Rogers 'in a vehicle that looked very like a cart. Wordsworth and Coleridge were entirely occupied in talking about poetry; and the whole care of looking out for cottages where they might get refreshment and pass the night, as well as of seeing their poor horse fed and littered, devolved upon Miss Wordsworth. She was a most delightful person—so full of talent, so simple-minded, and so modest!' Dorothy's 'Journal' for 1803, kept up despite her duties as caretaker-extraordinary, records the friendly hospitality and the stream of anecdotes with which the then Sheriff received the wanderers. The return visit was paid in 1805, when Scott

and Mrs. Scott came to Dove Cottage, and the men, with Sir Humphry Davy, climbed Helvellyn. 'We had ascended from Patterdale,' dictated Wordsworth in one of the Fenwick notes, 'and could not but admire the vigour with which Scott scrambled along that horn of the mountain called "Striding Edge." Our progress was necessarily slow, and was beguiled by Scott's telling many stories and amusing anecdotes, as was his custom. Sir Humphry Davy would probably have been better pleased if other topics had occasionally been interspersed, and some discussion entered upon: at all events he did not remain with us long at the top of the mountain, but left us to find our way down its steep side together into the Vale of Grasmere where, at my cottage, Mrs. Scott was to meet us at dinner.' On this occasion Scott made the unfulfilled prediction to Wordsworth: 'I mean to live till I am *eighty*, and I shall write as long as I live.' In 1825 the two met again in the Lake District, Wordsworth and Dora taking the visitors over Lowther Castle. Shortly after Scott's return to Abbotsford the crash came; his doors were closed upon the stream of visitors; his wife died; he moved to lodgings, and grudged every hour not spent at his work.

Five years saw him again at Abbotsford, the doors re-opening in mock gaiety for a last glimpse of a broken man. Repeated paralytic strokes had reduced an admirable vigour to a palsied feebleness. They affected more than his body. He nourished the delusion—naturally no one disabused him—that his debts were paid. He was waiting for the winter, expecting daily to be ordered south. The date of departure from Abbotsford was finally set for September 23, and on the 19th came Wordsworth and Dora for their farewell visit.

Between Lockhart's chronology and that given by Wordsworth in dictating to Miss Fenwick there is a discrepancy which is fortunately cleared up by Bishop Charles Wordsworth, whom we shall see later as 'cousin Charles,' in his 'Annals of my Early Life.' We take it then that Wordsworth arrived on Monday the 19th. There was a little group of visitors at Abbotsford, though nothing like the crowds of earlier days; and to pass the evening, Allan, the historical painter, 'hanging over the back of a chair, told and acted odd stories in a humorous way. With this exhibition and his daughter's singing, Sir Walter was much amused, as indeed were we all so far as circumstances would allow.'

On the next morning an excursion was made to Newark Castle, with *Yarrow Revisited* as one result. Of Scott's condition, says

Wordsworth: 'When we alighted from the carriage he walked pretty stoutly, and had great pleasure in revisiting these his favourite haunts. . . . On our return in the afternoon we had to cross the Tweed directly opposite Abbotsford. The wheels of our carriage grated upon the pebbles in the bed of the stream that there flows somewhat rapidly; a rich but sad light of rather a purple than a golden hue was spread over the Eildon Hills at that moment; and, thinking it probable that it might be the last time Sir Walter would cross the stream, I was not a little moved. . . .' On the morrow, Wednesday, there was a similar expedition to Melrose, from which they returned, perhaps via Chiefswood Cottage, where lived the Lockharts. This was near enough to Abbotsford for society, but removed from the direct stream of guests. Scott had been accustomed on occasion to go to his son-in-law at Chiefswood for refuge and a rest; whether he was present this day, I do not know, but there, at any rate, Dora's album made its appearance and was inscribed:

'Who fancies when Miss Wordsworth took
From groaning shelves their tiniest book
Without her host (of swains) she reckoned?
Another name (tho' scarce so grand)
Was destined, one may guess, to stand
On "Nearly ready—Volume second."

'J. G. LOCKHART,

'Chiefswood, Sept. 21, 1831.'

The 'one may guess' replaces some phrase obliterated. I suspect the other name which Lockhart had in his mind began with Q; but we have to pass this inference for a moment, not to break the theme of Abbotsford. For that we refer again to Lockhart, who proceeds in his narrative: 'Sitting that evening in the library, Sir Walter said a good deal about the singularity that Fielding and Smollett had both been driven abroad by declining health, and never returned—which circumstances, though his language was rather cheerful at the time, he had often before alluded to in darker fashion; and Mr. Wordsworth expressed his regret that neither of those great masters of romance appeared to have been surrounded with any due marks of respect in the close of life. I happened to observe that Cervantes, on his last journey to Madrid, met with an incident which seemed to have given him no common satisfaction. Sir Walter did not remember the passage, and desired me to find it out in the life by Pellicer which was at hand, and translate it. I did so, and he listened with lively, though

pensive, interest. . . ' Allan, who was present, later told Lockhart that he remembered ' nothing he ever saw with so much sad pleasure as the attitudes and aspect of Scott and Wordsworth as the story went on.' Wordsworth sat between Dora and Sir Walter, and wore the deep green eye-shade.

Early the next morning, before he came into the breakfast-room, Scott wrote a few stanzas in the little album. ' While putting the book into her hand,' says Wordsworth with precision, ' in his own study, standing by his desk, he said to her in my presence : " I should not have done anything of this kind but for your father's sake ; they are probably the last verses I shall ever write." ' They stand as follows :

'Tis well the gifted eye which saw
The first light sparks of fancy burn
Should mark its latest flash with awe
Low glimmering from its funeral urn.

'And thou mayst mark the hint, fair maid
How vain is worldly esteem
Good fortune turns affections fade
And fancy is an idle

'Yet not on this poor form alone,
My palsied hand and deafend ear
But on my country's fate
The bolts of fate seemed doom to speed

'The storm might whisper round my head
I would not deprecate the ill
So might I say when it was sped
My country be though glorious still

' W. SCOTT

' *Abbotsford,*

' *22 September, 1831.*

Of the pathetically shaken writing, the even more pathetic misconjuncts of thought and hand, I need say nothing. I have transcribed it exactly as written, with one exception. He omitted the initial S in his name. It is not remarkable that when Wordsworth wrote to Mrs. Hemans, speaking of Scott, he said, ' We prize this memorial very much, and the more so as an affecting testimony of his regard at the time when, as the verses prove, his health of body and powers of mind were much impaired and shaken.' For anyone less than Wordsworth, or Wordsworth's daughter, the

fragment were better unwritten. In the album it is followed by the sonnet, copied in by Mrs. Wordsworth, which Wordsworth began to compose as the carriage grated on the pebbles crossing the Tweed on the return from Yarrow—the sonnet which begins :

‘ A trouble, not of clouds or weeping rain.’

* * *

Charles Wordsworth, Dora's cousin, was at Abbotsford during the farewell visit chronicled in the last paragraphs, and he left with Wordsworth and Dora on September 22 for Edinburgh. They were proposing to tour the Highlands in the carriage with the young horse, Naso ; Dora's duties were to be the exact replicas of Dorothy's duties nearly thirty years before. Charles accompanied the pair as far as Callender, then separated to return, laden with messages and with the album, to the Lakes. Sarah Hutchinson, writing to Edward Quillinan on October 1, says, ‘ we expect him this evening.’

In the meanwhile, Scott left Abbotsford, attended by Lockhart and his daughter Anne, on the morning of September 23. By easy stages they reached London on the 28th. It was a difficult journey for his guardians. Lockhart writes : ‘ notwithstanding all his infirmities, he would not pass any object to which he had ever attached special interest, without getting out of the carriage to revisit it. His anxiety (for example) about the gigantic British or Danish effigy in the churchyard at Penrith, which we had all seen dozens of times before, seemed as great as if not a year had fled since 1797.’ He arrived in London just at the time of the riots about the Reform Bill, which seemed the ‘ bolts of fate ’ upon his country. The intensely formed habit of writing would not leave him utterly, though palsy made it for the most part impossible to get anything down. When he could, he sought refuge in his diary. Thus on October 2 :

‘ A total prostration of bodily strength is my chief complaint. I cannot walk half a mile. There is, besides, some mental confusion, with the extent of which I am not, perhaps, fully acquainted. I am perhaps setting. . . . I would compound for a little pain instead of this heartless muddiness of mind . . . the ruin which I fear involves that of my country.’

Scott had another year of breathing—hardly of life. Let us rather turn and follow the wanderers from Edinburgh. They were at Callender on September 28, reached Killin on the 29th, Tyndrum on the 30th, Dalnally on October 1, and halted at Bunawe for the 2nd and 3rd. Visiting Mull on the 4th and 5th, they returned

to Bunawe for two or three days, and then made their way leisurely back to the Lakes. Wordsworth writes in November to Lady Frederick Bentinck :

' You are quite right, dear Lady Frederick, in congratulating me on my late ramble in Scotland. I set off with a severe inflammation in one of my eyes, which was removed by being so much in the open air ; and for more than a month I scarcely saw a newspaper, or heard of their contents. During this time we almost forgot, my daughter and I, the deplorable state of the country. . . . We travelled in an open carriage with one horse, driven by Dora ; while we were in the Highlands I walked most of the way by the side of the carriage, which left us leisure to observe the beautiful appearances. The rainbows and coloured mists floating about the hills were more like enchantment than anything I ever saw, even among the Alps. There was in particular, the day we made the tour of Loch Lomond in the steam-boat, a fragment of a rainbow, so broad, so splendid, so glorious, with its reflection in the calm water, it astonished everyone on board, a party of foreigners especially, who could not refrain from expressing their pleasure in a more lively manner than we are accustomed to do.'

Professor Harper, whose ' Life of Wordsworth ' has been called upon for many of the above details, has published a delightful letter from Dora to her mother, written from Bunawe. She sends, dating the letter October 7, ' a report of our proceedings since we parted from Charles yesterday week at Callender,' and she encloses half a dozen sonnets, all ' written since the day we parted from Charles.' No. 1 is *A trouble, not of clouds or weeping rain*. At the foot of it is the request ' To be written in my little book after Sir Walter's verses ' ; and at the end of the six she puts ' You will please take care of these Gentlemen, as we have no fair copy of them.' When the letter arrived, Mrs. Wordsworth copied the sonnet into the album, mis-dating it September 6, 1831.

The ' proceedings ' are mostly concerned with Naso. Before their start Naso had been described by Dorothy to Mrs. Clarkson as ' a very steady horse.' Indeed, so steady and slow did he turn out to be, that Dora in the cart had some difficulty in keeping up with Wordsworth. They became discontented, ' Even when at Edinburgh we had tried to buy another horse, but could not succeed, and enquired for one at every village we came to.' This was on the outward journey ; when she comes in her narrative to the return from Mull, the chronicle of Naso resumes.

'Father has just been saying he thinks we must make the best of our way homewards; but we are in a puzzle about the carriage; we cannot get a horse, and really Naso is not fit to travel. From change of stables I suppose he has caught a bad cold; he is better to-day, but, of course, much pulled down. . . . N.B.—Observe Naso's failure was entirely owing to want of strength from his youth, and we were very gentle with him; after leaving Edinburgh he did not travel on an average *fifteen miles a day—no, not so much, as we can prove, and before not twenty, certainly not, nay not above ten*, including days' rests, of course. By hook or crook, God willing, we shall be at Carlisle on the 20th, and we will do the best we can for carriage, etc.'

In this letter Dora gives her father's opinion about daughters. 'Father joins me in congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. H. on the birth of a son, but from his own experience agrees with Mr. H. in thinking that Daughters are much more useful, and consequently a more desirable article.' But even compliments cannot keep her from the anxious subject of Naso. He appears again in a postscript: 'Naso is an excellent feeder. He was never once off his food on the journey, and even his bad cold does not appear to have affected his appetite, and we have no fault to find with him, as gentle and tractable a creature as can be. It was our fault for putting a child to man's work.' However, I judge the pony gathered an access of strength from thoughts of home, for they arrived sooner than they expected, on October 20.

At the time of their return Rydal Mount seems cheerful, save that Wordsworth is depressed about the condition of the country. Dora writes on October 26 to Eliza Hamilton, saying 'all are well, Father, Mother and Aunts, the first-mentioned still prophesying ruin and desolation on this hitherto flourishing spot of earth. The evil which he foresees from this dreadful Reform Bill quite weighs his spirit down.' But 1831 passed without more than fanciful causes for depression. Dora herself was strong and healthy, as we learn from a letter of Dorothy's to Crabb Robinson on December 1.

The year 1832 was not so fortunate. In that year Dorothy, after three years of good health, began again to suffer from her mysterious affliction. On April 1 Wordsworth writes to his brother that 'our dear sister makes no progress towards recovery of strength. She is very feeble, never quits her room, and passes most of the day in, or upon, the bed. She does not suffer much pain, and is very cheerful, and nothing troubles her but public affairs and the sense of requiring so much attention.' She seems to have rallied by May;

and in that month contributes the verses *To my niece Dora*, which Professor Knight prints under the year 1827. To be sure, the transcription in the album by Mary Wordsworth is dated January, 1827; but it is never safe to take Mrs. Wordsworth's dates without examination, and there is reference in the poem to Scott's farewell. The wrong date is cancelled by a note underneath :

‘Composed in May 1832 by me.
‘D. W.’

Of the verses, the last is the best known :

‘Yet still a lurking wish prevails;
That when from life we all have passed,
The Friends who loved thy Father's name
On her's a thought may cast.’

From now on, Dorothy is seen only as an invalid; ‘her reason,’ says Professor Harper, ‘no longer in continuous command.’ At first she still enjoys some measure of activity. In 1833 and 1834 we have such comments as (from Dora to her cousin Christopher) ‘Dear aunt goes out every day this beautiful weather . . . and in an evening, when we are alone, she sometimes brings her work down and sits an hour or two with us.’ Her manner of going out was in a phaeton, driven by Dora, and drawn by Naso. Gradually she became less able to leave her room, and the family were sometimes hard pressed to find delicacies that would please her wayward spirit. Wordsworth writes to Crabb Robinson in 1835, with Mrs. Wordsworth as amanuensis : ‘My sister lived some time in Norfolk when she was young, and fancies that she should like some Norfolk beefins, and has often said she was sure if Mr. Robinson knew how she longed for them, you would send her some. Could you contrive to bring her a box? All kinds of fruit are grateful to her.’ Three years later Dora writes to Christopher : ‘Nothing seems to give her pleasure, not even the sight of her dear brother . . . and often and often he comes down from her room, his eyes filled with tears, saying, “Well, all I can do for her now is to heat her nightcap for her. I have done it twenty times within the last quarter of an hour—that seems to give her a momentary pleasure, and that is some comfort.”’

* * *

After a visit to Moresby in the summer of 1832, Wordsworth and Dora returned to the Lakes and again wintered there. He was having trouble with his eyes, and found the long winter evenings

a burden. The following extracts, from Dora's letters to Christopher Wordsworth, came about this time. 'My father's eyes,' she says, 'are better, but too weak to allow of his writing or even looking at a book, and as he may not yet employ his mind, he finds these long firelight and candlelight evenings distressing and tiresome in the extreme. My mother and I read to him a great deal, but as neither her chest nor my throat is of the very strongest, we find it fatiguing, and he cannot always keep awake . . .' Again, in better weather—perhaps during the following spring: 'I have just now as little idle time as you, for my dear father is still a blind man; but, thank God, the active inflammation has entirely subsided . . . and he has now permission to go into the garden; for the last ten days he has been a prisoner to a dark room, and so very, very patient, but not very good, for compose sonnets he will, in spite of all the dreadful threats that are held out by his medical attendants; nor will the recollection of blisters on blisters, or leeches on leeches keep him quiet. Within the last few weeks he has composed upwards of forty sonnets, I believe, principally on subjects connected with his late tour . . .'

There are during this period several entries worth recording; but it is difficult to give the precise details of the signing. Lamb's contribution, though printed elsewhere, bears repetition.

'To Dora W——, on being asked by her father to write here.

'An Album is a Banquet: from the store,
In his intelligential Orchard growing,
Your Sire might heap your board to overflowing;—
One shaking of the Tree—'t would ask no more
To set a Salad forth, more rich than that
Which Evelyn* in his princely cookery fancied;
Or that, more rare, by Eve's neat hands enhanced,
Where, a pleased guest, the angelic Virtue sat.—
But, like the all-grasping Founder of the Feast,
Whom Nathan to the sinning King did tax,
From his less wealthy neighbours he exacts;
Spares his own flocks, and takes the Poor Man's beast.—
Obedient to his bidding, Lo, I am,
A zealous, meek, contributory

Lamb'

* 'Acetaria, a Discourse
of Sallets, by J. E., 1706.'

The verses are undated, but come somewhere late in 1832 or early in 1833. Lamb's little volume of 'Album Verses' came out

in 1830, but for some years after as well as before he was in demand for delicate memorials. In the spring of 1833 he told Crabb Robinson that by constant practice he could 'write acrostics and album verses, and such things, at request, with a facility that approaches that of the Italian *Improvvisatori*.' It is interesting to see the original, in his neat writing, for there are one or two erasures. 'Banquet,' in the first line, is a substitute; and the reference to Evelyn is indicated by a fancy cross of Lamb's concoction, rather than by the asterisk we have to use in reproduction.

There is no need to recapitulate the whole history of Wordsworth and Lamb. They first met at Stowey, in 1797, and had by this time been friends, with occasional differences, for thirty-five years; but one immortal evening in which both took part crops up whenever we think of them together. It was Haydon's party, in 1817; I quote the description from Mr. Lucas.

'The guests were Wordsworth, Monkhouse, Lamb, Keats, Ritchie, Landseer, and the unfortunate Comptroller of Stamps, a Mr. Kingston. This is Haydon's account of the evening: "On December 28th the immortal dinner came off in my painting-room, with Jerusalem towering up behind us as a background. Wordsworth was in fine cue, and we had a glorious set-to—on Homer, Shakespeare, Milton and Virgil. Lamb got exceedingly merry and exquisitely witty; and his fun in the midst of Wordsworth's solemn intonations of oratory was like the sarcasm and wit of the fool in the intervals of Lear's passion. He made a speech and voted me absent, and made them drink my health. 'Now,' said Lamb, 'you old lake poet, you rascally poet, why do you call Voltaire dull?' We all defended Wordsworth, and affirmed there was a state of mind when Voltaire would be dull. 'Well,' said Lamb, 'here's Voltaire—the Messiah of the French nation, and a very proper one too.'¹

"He then, in a strain of humour beyond description, abused me for putting Newton's head into my picture—'a fellow,' said he, 'who believed nothing unless it was as clear as the three sides of a triangle.' And then he and Keats agreed he had destroyed all the poetry of the rainbow by reducing it to the prismatic colours. It was impossible to resist him, and we all drank 'Newton's health, and confusion to mathematics.' It was delightful to see the good-humour of Wordsworth in giving in to all our frolics without affectation and laughing as heartily as the best of us. . . .

"In the morning of this delightful day, a gentleman, a perfect stranger, had called on me. He said he knew my friends, had an

¹ In Haydon's painting Wordsworth appears in the character of a disciple, and Voltaire as 'a sneering Jewish elder.'

enthusiasm for Wordsworth, and begged I would procure him the happiness of an introduction. He told me he was a comptroller of stamps, and often had corresponded with the poet. I thought it a liberty; but still, as he seemed a gentleman, I told him he might come.

"When we retired to tea we found the comptroller. In introducing him to Wordsworth I forgot to say who he was. After a little time the comptroller looked down, looked up and said to Wordsworth, 'Don't you think, sir, Milton was a great genius?' Keats looked at me, Wordsworth looked at the comptroller. Lamb, who was dozing by the fire turned round and said, 'Pray, sir, did you say Milton was a great genius?' 'No, sir; I asked Mr. Wordsworth if he were not.' 'Oh,' said Lamb, 'then you are a silly fellow.' 'Charles! my dear Charles!' said Wordsworth; but Lamb, perfectly innocent of the confusion he had created, was off again by the fire.

"After an awful pause the comptroller said, 'Don't you think Newton a great genius?' I could not stand it any longer. Keats put his head into my books. Ritchie squeezed in a laugh. Wordsworth seemed asking himself, 'Who is this?' Lamb got up, and taking a candle, said, 'Sir, will you allow me to look at your phrenological development?' He then turned his back on the poor man, and at every question of the comptroller he chaunted:

'Diddle diddle dumpling, my son John
Went to bed with his breeches on.'

The man in office, finding Wordsworth did not know who he was, said in a spasmodic and half-chuckling anticipation of assured victory, 'I have had the honour of some correspondence with you, Mr. Wordsworth.' 'With me, sir?' said Wordsworth, 'not that I remember.' 'Don't you, sir? I am a comptroller of stamps.' There was a dead silence—the comptroller evidently thinking that was enough. While we were waiting for Wordsworth's reply, Lamb sung out:

'Hey diddle diddle
The cat and the fiddle.'

'My dear Charles!' said Wordsworth,—

'Diddle diddle dumpling, my son John,'

chaunted Lamb, and then rising, exclaimed, 'Do let me have another look at that gentleman's organs.' Keats and I hurried Lamb into the painting-room, shut the door and gave way to inextinguishable laughter. Monkhouse followed and tried to get Lamb away. We went back, but the comptroller was irreconcilable. We soothed and smiled and asked him to supper. He stayed,

though his dignity was sorely affected. However, being a good-natured man, we parted all in good humour, and no ill effects followed.

"All the while, until Monkhouse succeeded, we could hear Lamb struggling in the painting-room and calling at intervals, 'Who is that fellow? Allow me to see his organs once more.'

"It was indeed an immortal evening. Wordsworth's fine intonation as he quoted Milton and Virgil, Keats's eager inspired look, Lamb's quaint sparkle of lambent humour, so speeded the stream of conversation, that in my life I never passed a more delightful time. All our fun was within bounds. Not a word passed that an apostle might not have listened to. It was a night worthy of the Elizabethan age, and my solemn Jerusalem flashing up by the flame of the fire, with Christ hanging over us like a vision, all made up a picture which will long glow upon—

'that inward eye

Which is the bliss of solitude.'

Keats made Ritchie promise he would carry his 'Endymion' to the great desert of Sahara and fling it into the midst.

"Poor Ritchie went to Africa, and died, as Lamb foresaw, in 1819. Keats died in 1821, at Rome. C. Lamb is gone, joking to the last. Monkhouse is dead, and Wordsworth and I are the only two now living (1841) of that glorious party."

Mary Lamb's entry, somewhat later on, is dated nearly three years after Charles Lamb's death. It is—

'On a picture by Leonardo Da Vinci called "The Virgin of the Rocks."

'Maternal lady with the virgin grace,
Heaven-born thy Jesus seemeth sure,
And thou a virgin pure.
Lady most perfect, when thy sinless face
Men look upon, they wish to be
A Catholic, Madonna fair to worship thee.

'MARY ANN LAMB.'

'September 7, 1837.'

We naturally recall the passage in the essay of 'Bridget Elia' which refers to the buying of Leonardos when the pair were 'in the middle state' between poverty and competence. The actual picture, a framed copy of 'The Virgin of the Rocks,' was given to Mary Lamb by Crabb Robinson in 1816—by which gift Lamb was made 'delighted as a child.'

To return to 1832, in that year there is a sonnet to Wordsworth by the simple, kindly, and generous Hartley Coleridge; an epigram by Thomas Campbell; and a fragment by Henry Laid. In 1833 Milton's *Sweet Echo* is copied in by G. Rigby, of Ash, Kent; and there appear as well two signatures which are somewhat out of keeping with the rest of the album—Talleyrand and Wellington. Henry Hallam follows them with an admonition in Italian; and the entries then skip to Wordsworth's London visits in the early months of 1835.

He stayed this time with Henry Taylor. 'This old philosopher,' writes Taylor of his guest, 'is one of the most extraordinary human phenomena that one could have in the house. He has the simplicity and helplessness of a child in regard to the little transactions of life . . . Everything that comes into his mind comes out—weakness or strength, affections or vanities . . . He is very happy with us, and very social with everybody, and we have a variety of people to meet him every day at breakfast and dinner.' At a dinner party at Rogers' during this trip, Wordsworth told Thomas Moore some naïve things about himself. Moore notes in his 'Journal': 'In giving me an account of the sort of society he had in his neighbourhood in the country, and saying that he rarely went out to dinner, he gave a very intelligible picture of the sort of thing it must be when he *does* go out. "The conversation" he said, "may be called *catechetical*; for, as they do me the honour to wish to know my opinions on the different subjects, they ask me questions and I am induced to answer them at great length, till I become quite tired." And so he does, I'll warrant him; nor is it possible indeed, to edge in a word, at least in a tête-à-tête, till he *does* get tired. I was, however, very well pleased to be a listener.' In a later entry in the 'Journal,' Moore speaks again of this dinner. 'The day I met Wordsworth at dinner at Rogers' the last time I was in town, he asked us all in the evening to write something in a little album of his daughter's and Wilkie drew a slight sketch in it . . .'

Henry Luttrell was the first, I think, to sign on this occasion; and of two fragments which he wrote, the following particularly took Moore's fancy:

'Crushed by an Omnibus—Why not?
So quick a death a boon is;
Let not his friends lament his lot
Mors Omnibus communis.'

Then Moore himself :

'Like the gale that sighs along
 Beds of Oriental flowers
 Is the grateful breath of song
 That once was heard in happier hours.
 Fill'd with balm, the gale sighs on
 Though the flowers have sunk in death,
 So when pleasure's dream is gone
 Its memory lives in music's breath.'

In speaking of Wordsworth and Moore, the latter was not the only one who saw faults in the other. Wordsworth once remarked that 'Moore had great natural genius; but he is too lavish of brilliant ornament. His poems smell of the perfumers' and milliners' shops. He is not content with a ring and a bracelet, but he must have rings in the ears, rings in the nose—rings everywhere.'

After Sir David Wilkie's sketch come Chantrey's signature and a beautifully-finished little water-colour of a Westmoreland landscape by Copley Fielding. Then an entry over which we pause a moment.

'Glorious the names that cluster here,
 The loftiest of our lofty isle;
 Who can approach them void of fear,
 Tho' Genius urge and Friendship smile.

'To lay one stone upon the hill,
 And shew that I have climb'd so high,
 Is what they bid me . . . Wordsworth's will
 Is law, and Landon must comply.

'WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR,

'May 15, 1836.'

'Temple.'

Landon, who had met Wordsworth at Moresby in 1832, had come to town expressly to see the first night of Talfourd's *Ion* with Macready acting. Since the last entries and the visit of 1835, Wordsworth had wintered at Rydal; but the spring of 1836 saw him in town, and, at the first performance of the tragedy, he, Landon, and Crabb Robinson, occupied a box. Miss Elizabeth Wordsworth quotes a letter of John Dix for a description of the evening.

'In the next box to Joanna Baillie sat William Wordsworth, and the great poet was, of course, an object of not a little attention. As soon as he entered the house he was recognised and loudly cheered. Whether he was ignorant that the compliment was intended for him or not I cannot tell, but he did not notice it. He

leaned over and shook hands with Joanna, and then sat down, removing his green spectacles, and leaning his thoughtful looking head on his hand, gazed round the house, nodding to one and another as he recognised them. . . . He looked more like to a man borne down by some heavy grief than a profound thinker. His smile, when he chanced to greet any acquaintance, was a solemn affair, and it speedily vanished. . . . Mrs. Sigourney, the American poetess, said she had remarked the same sad look even when surrounded by his own family. During the whole of the tragedy (nearly five hours), W. did not leave his seat, and frequently . . . applauded portions of the piece. Indeed he thumped with his stick most lustily; and if Talfourd saw him he must have been not a little gratified.'

Professor Harper doubts the 'loud cheering,' on the reasonable ground the Crabb Robinson would have been sure to note such an incident. The remainder of the picture is credible enough. Afterwards the whole party, including, I think, John Forster, went round to Talfourd's house; and though, at this time, to others Landor and Wordsworth seemed well pleased with each other, some seeds were being sown for future strife. Landor, extraordinary mixture of 'ardent enthusiasm and lofty scorn,' was flushed with pride of *Ion*; Wordsworth, whose spirits sometimes cooled with the lateness of the hour, and who in general maintained in Carlyle's phrase, 'a rock-like indifference to the battle,' was judged a dissenting spirit by the precision, rather than eloquence, of his remarks. At any rate, in thinking over Wordsworth's conversation, Landor began to let certain antipathies come uppermost within his memory. He objected to the rigid boundaries in Wordsworth's intellectual sympathies; and, more than anything else, he resented with a blaze of anger the saying, which someone related to him, that Wordsworth would not give five shillings a ream for the poetry of Southey. The satire in which he eased his anger and his mood of personal animosity, was promptly forgotten by Landor himself. It ruffled Wordsworth little at the time, but it was the beginning of a slowly widening breach which never healed. Landor's 'for ever,' as Sir Sidney Colvin gently points out, 'rarely lasted more than a few weeks.' With Wordsworth, however, such matters had a trick of intensifying themselves as he looked back upon them; and in regard to a later controversy between Quillinan and Landor, Wordsworth wrote to Hamilton in 1843 in a tone of acrimony which is best forgotten.

(To be continued.)

CALCUTTA'S CHINATOWN.

FOR over twenty years I had known Calcutta, but there was one bit of it I had never explored—Chinatown. Always it had figured vaguely in my mind as some evil-smelling, overcrowded slum, squalid and dirty and draggled by day and a 'City of dreadful night' when darkness had fallen. Always I had meant to explore it, this quarter of the second city in the Empire that at once repelled and fascinated, around which so great a haze of glamour had arisen, chiefly at the touch of the pen of a ready writer. And always I had put it off as one of those things on the spot that could be done at any time, with the result that twenty years had passed without the doing of it.

Then suddenly the personal link with Chinatown was forged. Among varied and numerous other duties of a new official post to which I was gazetted I found myself in charge of the licences of the Chinese restaurants in Chinatown. So it was officially, at last, and not as a merely curious visitor, that I paid my first visit to the Chinese quarter. Among the many files that awaited me was one containing a petition from a Chinaman praying for a licence to open a new Chinese restaurant, so instead of making it over to a subordinate for inquiry and report, I determined to set out to see things for myself. And forthwith began a series of surprises and a shattering of preconceived illusions.

In the first place I was informed that there were only two Chinese restaurants licensed to sell liquor in the whole of Chinatown. The application for a licence about which I had set out to inquire would but make the third among a Chinese population of some two thousand. First I visited the two already established—the Canton and the Chung Wah, situated, although the only two in the whole city, in the same lane and almost opposite one another. It was four o'clock in the afternoon and a slack time in the Chinese quarter so far as its out-door life is concerned. Some distance away as the streets grew narrower I left the car, as advised by my little Superintendent of Excise, and together we wended our way on foot deeper into the heart of Chinatown. There are practically none but Chinese here. All the shops bear Chinese names, innumerable notice boards, long narrow slips of black or red wood for the most part covered with the weird Chinese characters in gold. The tiny

work shops, open to the street, are hives of industry, and every one of them seems to be a carpenter's. For this is the carpenter's quarter. Two trades only, the little superintendent tells me, as we thread the narrow streets, do the Chinese in Calcutta follow—carpentering, and shoe making. Shops of other kinds there are many, with sweetmeats and fruit galore, gay with tinsel and gaudy pictures and candles and brightly coloured incense sticks. It is rarely that one sees a Chinese woman as one passes along the streets. There are few in Calcutta compared with the men, most Chinamen leaving their wives and families behind them when they come abroad to seek their fortune.

The Canton restaurant at the corner of a narrow street is an unpretentious, single-storied building and one is surprised at its smallness within. Some half a dozen little tables fill all the available open space, the rest of the room being divided off into six little cubicles where meals can be taken in private. It being four o'clock in the afternoon the place was empty save for the manager—a spotlessly clean figure in white drill—and a few servants, with a glimpse of activities in the kitchen beyond. Tea was quickly produced, the light coloured rather bitter Chinese tea without milk or sugar, and as we sipped it the manager answered my many questions. The proprietor was away in Bombay where he had large contracts. He had bought this restaurant some three years before when it was the only Chinese restaurant in Calcutta. He himself, the manager, had come from Canton nine months ago. His command of English was wonderful, and he had not the same difficulty with his *r*'s that most Chinamen have. Yet before he left Canton he had little to do with anything English. The licence fee for the restaurant is three hundred rupees a year, but from next year onwards it is to be calculated on the amount of liquor sold, two annas on every quart bottle of wine or spirits and two pice on beer. It will be interesting to see how this works out as compared with the previous lump sum tax. It is only an 'On' licence. No liquor can be sold to be taken away to be consumed off the premises. In the hall hung the bill of fare—on the one side the English dishes and on the other side the Chinese. The latter with its chow and mushrooms and 'Mavi' fish looked attractive, and the manager was most anxious I should try them. Would I come and dine one night? This and that distinguished official had honoured the restaurant and many Europeans came. If I would come he would give me a dinner consisting entirely of Chinese dishes. It was too novel and inter-

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esting an invitation to refuse, and a date was fixed there and then. After dinner it was arranged that I should visit the Chinese opium dens and gambling halls.

The other Chinese restaurant almost opposite is larger and was opened to cope with the demand, the Canton restaurant, we were given to understand, being formerly so overcrowded that the queue system had to be introduced. It was much on the same lines as the first, with a few tables in the open and a row of cubicles round the walls. The manager was equally courteous and attractive, so in order that there should be no favouritism, I agreed to dine there too later on.

Of course some of my friends held up their hands in horror when they heard that I was going to dine in the Chinese quarter. They conjured up all sorts of dreadful possibilities, of virulent microbes and fell diseases and sudden death. The great majority of Englishmen and Englishwomen in the East live entirely in a little circle of their own, knowing nothing of the real India. It is amazing how little some who have spent their twenty or thirty years in India know of it at first hand outside their daily round of English social life, of dinner parties, dances, gymkhanas, and the club where Indian life does not penetrate. 'How very odd to go and dine in a Chinese restaurant in the Chinese quarter when one can have one's own dinner in comfort in one's own house,' was the general attitude. But there were exceptions who showed keenness to explore the unknown and after I had been and told others of the excellence of the dinner and the interest of the evening, there were many who went and explored on their own. On that first evening I took with me just one man friend, carefully chosen, and we set forth about eight o'clock. We had decided not to put on dress clothes, but to go in ordinary day suits. And our first impression on setting forth was of the tyranny of clothes. Not to be in evening dress in London, or for that matter elsewhere in England, after eight o'clock at night would cause no comment and give rise to no feeling of strangeness, but in Calcutta to be a Sahib and not to be in evening dress at dinner time was an event. It was a thing that had never occurred to one to think about before, but we neither of us could remember a single occasion on which we had not dressed for dinner in all the years we had been in Calcutta. It gave one an extraordinary feeling of lacking the wedding garment of respectability. We felt we should need to explain ourselves if by chance we met anyone we knew.

Some distance from the restaurant we left the car and being met by one of my superintendents we proceeded the rest of the way along the narrow winding roads on foot. It was a weird scene by night, so utterly unlike the English Calcutta that one knew. Rickshaws, scarcely ever seen in the European quarters, were plying here in numbers, one Indian coolie pulling and usually two Chinamen inside. Dim gas lamps here and there along the walls made the darkness visible. Somewhere a flaming oil lamp lit up a tiny shop and threw a flickering light across the road. Chinamen on foot shuffled by, always in white, with bare heads, their skins striking one as extraordinarily light compared with the Indian's to which one had grown accustomed. At the restaurant the manager in his spotless white clothes and with his broadest smile of welcome and his little jerky bow awaited us, and we were ushered past the tables, crowded with Chinese at their dinner, into one of the little cubicles at the end of the room. It was a little disappointing to find ourselves about to be shut away out of sight of the life of the restaurant proper, but it had to be, as our presence would have attracted too much attention at one of the public tables. 'It would not do at all,' said the superintendent firmly when I suggested it, adding, when he saw that I was about to protest, 'but your Honour can see out through the purdah of the cubicle if your Honour so desires.'

So the curtain was drawn back and a partial view of the room obtained, and what one could not see one heard, a long low-voiced babel of many tongues. Only one party was loud-voiced, a noisy quartet of Eurasians in an adjoining cubicle, whose chi-chi accent cut into the constant murmur with all the clear and harsh distinctness of its curious timbre. Straight in front of us, framed in the open doorway, sat three young Chinamen who might have been ship's officers in their spotless white drill suits, buttoned to the neck, and their clean, fair skins and cheery faces. Their whole appearance as they sat at table was so extraordinarily of the West. They were the Chinese of to-day. Beside them at the next table there sat four of their fellow countrymen, yet as unlike them as they could well be. They were of the old school, with the set stolid countenances of the Chinese workman, wrinkled and withered, with stiff little tufts of grey hair. They looked like opium smokers, marked by that curious passivity of face and figure that drugs leave behind them. They sat at the table, their meal finished, scarcely moving in an almost unbroken silence. Further on a couple of Eurasian youths sat drinking, heads close together, greatly amused

with their own conversation, a background instinct with life beyond the immobility of the four old Chinamen between us.

But the dinner soon demanded all our attention. After a long course of Indian cooking, I thought it the most delicious I had ever tasted. It began with bird's nest soup in a charming Chinese bowl, a wonderful mixture of succulent things. It was almost impossible to detect what the ingredients were, save for the tasty Chinese mushroom. One joy, as the dinner proceeded, we discovered to be the absence of ghee or butter which is generally only too noticeably prevalent in Indian cooking and of which one gets so deadly tired. The Chinese use neither ghee nor butter—but only specially prepared lard. The full menu as given to us read as follows :

Bird's nest soup.

Mavi fish.

Prawns with mushrooms.

Flesh with shark's fins.

Chinese curry.

Pudding.

Eggs (seven years old).

The cooking was most excellent and appealed greatly to our English palates. Nothing was too highly spiced or over flavoured. The curry was delicious and in most of the dishes Chinese mushrooms appeared in some form or other, adding a delightful flavour of their own. The great art of the cooking lay in the fact that each dish contained an extraordinary number of ingredients skilfully blended so as to produce just the right unique flavour. Five courses succeeded one another, each with its own special appeal. The sixth was an unexpected and unwelcome surprise. I had expressly stipulated that every course should be exclusively Chinese, and so far each one had been unmistakably so, but alas, for the sixth. It consisted of a very solid slice of a very solid British pudding well bespattered with the inevitable Indian white sauce.

'Now I particularly said nothing but Chinese dishes,' I protested to the little manager who had come in at the moment to see how we were getting on.

'Me thinking Englishmen thinking dinner no good without sweet something,' he said apologetically, rubbing his hands.

'But why not something Chinese in the way of sweets?' I asked.

'Chinese never taking sweet anything,' he replied. 'Chinese liking no sweet.'

I knew that the flavour of Chinese tea must never be spoiled by the addition of milk or sugar, but I did not know that everything sweet was eschewed by the Chinese.

Just then there was the sound of a slight disturbance outside. Someone was evidently trying to enter the little private room where we sat, and someone else was as evidently trying to prevent him. Suddenly the curtain was thrust aside and in came a curious old figure that might have claimed almost any nationality. A large massive face, that might in calmer moments have graced a Roman Cardinal, was crowned with a mass of iron-grey hair and there was a dignity about the tall, heavy figure of which even the excitement under which he was obviously labouring did not entirely rob him. He began to speak in a rush of words, English of a very Chinese description, in fact of so Chinese a description that it was difficult to tell what he was saying. The manager and my little superintendent were excitedly expostulating with him—the one in Chinese and the other in Bengali—evidently on the enormity of his conduct in disturbing the Sahibs at their dinner. The intruder apparently had some grievance that he wished to represent to authority, but what it was I was unable to gather in the midst of the excitement. I asked my superintendent to tell him that I should be glad to see him to hear anything he had to say the next morning in my office, and they gradually succeeded in quieting and removing him.

'Has he been drinking Chinese liquor?' I asked the profoundly apologising manager.

'Oh no, your Honour, only Exshaw No. 1,' was the deprecating and unexpected reply.

Dinner ended with preserved eggs seven years old. They were of a rich dark green and would have looked most appetising if one had not known what they were. But I, knowing, confess that the thought of them made me shudder, although I tried manfully to eat them. I cannot say that I enjoyed them. To the English palate they are one of those things that rank as acquired tastes. It was the only course of the dinner that I had not thoroughly appreciated.

At the end came Chinese tea and Sham Shu. The last we were told was a famous Chinese liqueur. It looked like kummel and tasted more like vodka than anything else I have tasted. It was too fiery to drink more than half the generous quantity provided in the very big liqueur glasses.

It was a gloriously clear, cold, starlight night outside, and the sight that met our eyes as we came out on to the steps was an

astonishing one. The three narrow roads that branch off from the restaurant were crowded with cars, carriages, taxis and ticca gharries of all descriptions. It was an amazing scene. The narrow streets bordered by low irregular lines of eastern buildings were a-block with life, glaringly visible in the blaze of the electric street lamps or shrouded in almost inky darkness beyond. Every colour under the sun seemed to be represented in the sea of moving faces. Chinese predominated, but amongst them was a fine sprinkling of Indians, Eurasians, and Europeans, strange unkempt figures down at heels with that curiously forsaken look that anything approaching white seems to acquire on the downward grade in India. Some of them were mere youths, listless and dissipated, with pale coffee-coloured faces out of which stared light green cat-like eyes: It was Christmas week and Chinatown like every other part of the city was crowded with holiday makers.

Close by down a narrow lane was the first of the gambling houses we visited. A new two-storied building, it stood out among the low irregular houses on either side. A big broken electric lamp lit the outside of it and a very filthy curtain covered the doorway. Inside in the brilliant light were two long tables round which crowded Chinamen of every age and in every stage of deshabelle. One's first impression was of the extraordinary placidity of the faces. It was so unlike the gambling tables at Monte Carlo and elsewhere in the West. Here, whatever the excitement of the game might be, outwardly at least the players gave no sign. The only break from the prevailing placidity was an occasional smile of resignation as the counters were swept off the board into the banker's pocket. For it was the placidity, not of sullen or glum acceptance of fate, but of cheerful light-hearted resignation to whatever fate might send. They were all Chinese. No one else in this advanced second city of the Empire is allowed by law to gamble. But in the Chinese even the British Government found itself up against a dead wall. Gambling is inbred in their very nature, and no law yet made has been strong enough to make the smallest impression upon it. So Government, recognising the inevitable, made an exception to one of its strictest laws in favour of the Chinaman. But woe betide any one else, of whatever nationality, found gambling in Chinatown.

At one table was played the game of fantan. It is a game of the simplest description and one of pure chance. The table is divided into four spaces which are numbered one, two, three, four. The banker then pushes forward in front of him a great

heap of cowries which are always used as counters. When all have staked on the four squares or on the lines dividing them, he begins to draw away the cowries from the heap with a little stick four at a time. If finally there are four left over, the fourth square wins. If only three the third square wins and so on. The chief interest of the game to the onlooker lies in the amazing quickness with which the players spot how many cowries are going to be left at the last. While the heap is still so big that the unaccustomed eye cannot possibly count them, one of the players will call out the final number remaining and he is seldom wrong. It is a fascinating game to watch, waiting for the first eager player to call out the winning number while the little heap of cowries is still bewilderingly large. The other game is known as Sabichi, and depends solely on the turn of the dice. It is less popular than fantan. The dice make a quick and decisive ending, whereas the cowries like the little ball on the roulette board give the long and lingering delight of uncertainty.

It is something of an astonishment to the stranger to be told that the gambling den and the Chinese church live under the same roof. Yet this is apparently so everywhere in Chinatown. Here the church is upstairs, its altar a blaze of brass and copper surrounding the central figure, with an ebony mother-of-pearl inlaid table in front. Everything has been brought from China, including the elaborately carved chairs, three on either side of the altar, and the long inscribed scrolls of gold and red that adorn the walls. There is little of the atmosphere of a church about it to the western mind, yet the altar with its tiny hanging light is not without its dignity. At the further end of the room is a little veranda looking down upon the cross roads. It is a fascinating picture spread out below—the narrow street with its picturesque stream of passers by, the quaint irregular little rows of houses, the jumble of roofs beyond, and in the dark wooden shanty opposite an interior dimly illuminated by the lamp beyond the open window, a woman rocking her child to sleep and an old man peering intently over a book close up against the light.

Descending into the street again we wandered through the narrow streets and at length found ourselves in a tiny alley with shut doors on every side. A knock on one of these brought immediate response and we stumbled into the little dark passage within. Beyond lay the opium den, dimly lit with little oil lamps. One hardly knows what one had expected to see, but assuredly it was not this. There is no attempt at comfort in a Calcutta opium

den as the West conceives it. A low platform runs all round the walls covered with clean shining matting made out of plantain bark. Stretched full length along it, side by side, heads to the walls, feet towards the centre of the room, lie the smokers. All of them are lying on their right sides, their pipes beside them, some full length, far gone into oblivion, others raised on their elbows still inhaling the intoxicating fumes. Their pipes are curious, a foot and a half long with the diminutive bowl towards the end which the keeper of the den stuffs with opium, and the smoker himself lights over the tiny smoking oil lamp beside him. It is the lack of physical comfort that strikes one so forcibly, but perhaps this is not deemed necessary when the drug brings such delight and solace to the mind, carrying one beyond the reach of things material. Even the pillows provided, if they tend to cleanliness, assuredly do not to comfort. They make up, however, in picturesqueness. Many coloured, some plain green or blue, others of the blue-and-white Chinese pattern, they are also of many shapes, some of lacquer, some of china. Most of them are oblong china blocks, hollow inside, all about ten inches by six by three. Absurdly small for a pillow from a western point of view, they seem to serve the purpose admirably here. They are cool and clean and as opium does not tend to restlessness none of the heads asleep upon them seem in danger of falling off. There is nothing else in the room save a shelf at the end where tea is brewed in rough, quaint-shaped teapots and drunk in little handleless Chinese cups. It is a fascinating scene in the dim light, illuminated only by the tiny oil lamps that stand beside each smoker to light his pipe with. Curiously enough there is nothing outwardly repulsive about the scene. The smokers look mere ordinary harmless Chinamen, peacefully smoking or fast asleep. There is nothing in their faces to mark them as opium fiends. In fact it would be wrong to term most of them opium fiends at all. They are just tired and weary Chinamen seeking sleep and dreams after a hard day's work. What effect it has upon them in the morning one does not see, but as one looks round upon the sleeping figures there can be no doubt about the oblivion they have purchased for the moment.

And so one leaves them and Chinatown and wends one's way through the narrow streets to where the car is waiting to speed one back again into another world—the modern Calcutta of the twentieth century—that sleeps, oblivious as the opium smoker himself, of the wonderful glimpse of another life that dwells so close beside it.

SHELLAND BRADLEY.

BETTER-BE-'ALF.

BY ALFRED OLLIVANT.

I.

POLLY HOWE was a cockney, though you would never have guessed it from her glorious physique and colouring. She had been born and bred in a mean street in Tottenham, of the small shop-keeper class. But all her life her heart had been in the fields and woods. Whether the urge within her was the outcome of heredity or some sport of nature it was hard to say. In the family there was a vague tradition that her grandfather came of farming stock. But her father, a garrulous fellow enough of wont, always showed himself sensitive and secretive upon this subject. Jim, her eldest brother, however, recorded to the younger generation an incident that appeared to throw some light upon the matter. He said that he remembered as a small child a queer old photograph of a man in a smock, with side-whiskers and a top-hat, and a long whip in his hand.

'Looks like a carter,' mused Polly.

'Unless fancy-dress,' suggested the ingenious Dorothy.

Jim shook his head sombrely.

'There was a cart or something in the background,' he suggested.

'And a tent. Looked like a fair.'

Winifred, the accepted beauty of the family, wrinkled her nose.

'O lor!' she said. 'Like a common servant almost.'

'I don't see it's anything to be ashamed of if he was,' remarked Polly doubtfully.

'You wouldn't,' said the sarcastic Jim. 'Here, why don't you go out as a general servant yourself? Cap and apron and scrub the front-steps before them all on Sundays.'

'Because I don't want to,' replied Polly, curtly.

Later Winifred, the eldest, lectured her erring younger sister.

'It's too awful,' she said. 'You must never tell, Poll. It'd be the end of us if it were known. Who's going to marry a carter's granddaughter?'

The Man with the Carter's Whip was recognised thereafter by

Polly's generation as the skeleton in the family cupboard. Whether he was in fact her grandfather Polly never knew ; but if the origin of her passion might be in doubt, the reality of it could not be questioned. The earth and its simple natives drew this splendid creature of the towns as like draws like. When quite a baby she would stop opposite the hoardings on which were depicted the noble bulls of Bovril gazing forth majestically on to back-alleys and coal-yards from smiling Swiss uplands, and point her finger and gurgle *Moo !*

When she came to school-age, the fortnight in the fields made possible for her by the Children's Country Holiday Fund was for her the great annual festival. She bathed in it simply and luxuriously, going about the woods and pastures with glad open eyes, open heart, open pores, absorbing the goodness of fields and hedgerows and grazing beasts.

'You enjoys this, I reck'n, Poll,' her hostess would say.

'I doos, Mrs. Goatcher,' the child would reply, reflecting even the speech of her new environment.

From the moment she began to earn, she took in the *Stock-keeper* and read it in secret in her room behind locked doors, stuffing it away under her mattress when read lest any should lay sacrilegious hands upon it and mock.

Later, when established as a typist, she asked shyly enough one morning for a day off.

'What for ?' asked the governor.

'To go to the Fat Stock Show at Islington.'

Mr. Jacob's pince-nez trickled off his nose, as they had been attempting to do for several years now.

'Ba'my,' he said ; but he gave her permission all the same.

The big-limbed young woman in the feathered hat walked round the show amid pigs and beasts and poultry with the pleased yet slightly deferential air of a duckling first taking to its natural element. She was in a kind of trance ; rapt out of herself in this new world, so strange to her, and yet so mysteriously familiar. Opposite *Southdown Princess*, the champion shorthorn heifer, with a back like a billiard-table, and a body like a block of granite, she stood spell-bound. The man in charge, a young fellow in a white coat, with Olympian curl, well-oiled, stopped sucking the knob of his ash-plant.

'What ye think of her ?' he asked.

'Grand,' Polly answered deeply, out of a chest like a cathedral.

The young fellow took the knob out of his mouth.

'Like yerself,' he said.

Polly emerged suddenly from her sea of dreams into the glare of a world in which there was nothing much but men who wanted her.

'What's that?' she asked harshly.

The young man with the secret eyes tilted towards her.

'Two on ye,' he said, and jerked his head towards his sleek and massive charge. 'You and her.'

Polly moved on with dignity.

'You're drunk,' she said. 'Too many old mangold-wurzels gone to your head, I should say.'

II.

Because she came of the shop-keeper class Polly was altogether above domestic service in her own estimation and that of her people. That was how, when called upon to choose her means of livelihood, she became a typist in a small firm in the city. Apart from its alleged social advantages the position offered no attractions. She loathed her work, and her great rejoicing spirit beat against the bars of its sordid and constrained environment like a caged bird. Moreover she cherished jealously that deep and secret ambition for which she sought expression in vain.

The firm in the city for which she worked dealt exclusively in wholesale rubber stamps made in Germany. It was in a small way of business but prosperous enough. Besides herself the staff consisted of a youth and her governor. When War broke out Polly's colleague deserted without notice to join the Army. Polly and her governor were left. He too was young: a little, rather diffident Jew with pince-nez perched precariously upon a slippery nose, that she defined aptly enough as 'nibbly.'

'Business as usual!' said Mr. Jacob, quoting sarcastically the *cant phrase of the moment*, as he picked his teeth and looked out of the dirty window on to the deserted September street. 'Only wish it were. That's all.'

'What shall you do?' asked Polly sympathetically. She rather liked the little man.

'Only one thing for it as I can see,' the other answered gloomily.

'What's that?'

'Close daown and go bankrupt.'

Polly slipped off her stool and took her hat from the peg. The news came to her as no shock, rather as relief. Being a naturally loyal soul she had meant to stick to her post as long as her post stuck to her—and no longer. But her ambition was always there, gnawing at her heart; and the War was opening to her as to millions more a door of escape into the open country.

'Then you won't want me any more, Mr. Jacob,' she said.

The young man still picked his teeth and stared out of the window.

'I always want you,' he mumbled at last, like a sulky child.

'What!' laughed Polly.

He turned gloomily.

'You won't come down to Margit with me for a week-end? Wind up friendly like. Hall o' dance. Shrimps and sands beside the seaside. Good old Margit!'

Polly laughed again, a little shrilly this time, and patted the massed and sombre glory of her hair.

'I thank you. I don't think,' she replied sarcastically.

He turned his plump back on her. Instinct told her correctly that her rebuff had given the soft little man immense relief.

'No offence, I'm sure,' he muttered. 'I thought I owed you the offer like. See you've stuck by me as you might say.' There was an awkward pause. Then he began again, his back still turned.

'Ever think of marryink?' Mr. Jacob had the trick of working into his conversation scraps from popular music-hall songs.

Polly giggled as might a Madonna.

'Who?' she asked.

'Me,' answered the gloomy young man.

Polly, momentarily taken a-back, recovered her balance instantly.

'But if you can't keep yourself, Mr. Jacob, you can't keep a wife,' she said with a sound practical common-sense that did not distinguish all her actions.

'There's something in that,' he answered sombrely. Going to a drawer, he unlocked it, took out a bag, and paid her no more and no less than he owed her.

'What shall you do?' he asked.

'I shall go on the land,' answered Polly. She said it with a force and a firmness that betrayed the urge of long-thwarted desire.

He considered her for some time through his pince-nez.

'You look it,' he said at last bitterly.

Polly was genuinely sorry for him. He had never been unkind to her, and even actively considerate at times.

'What shall *you* do, Mr. Jacob?' she asked in her turn with genuine interest.

'Sponge on Ma long as she'll let me, I suppose.' He swung about with sudden vivacity. 'Give me one!' he pleaded. 'Just to go on with. It's a funny world. May never meet, Sweet, no more—never hany more!'

She stood before him now, grave and magnificent, with downward eyes. He took her silence rightly enough for acquiescence and pecked her sedately on the temple.

'Thank yow,' he said. 'So long. See ye again before I go to Spain—I hope.'

They parted, Polly with full throat.

Three years afterwards he died grudgingly enough in khaki on a hillside in the valley of Askalon where, unknown to him, some two thousand years before, his ancestors had herded flocks and tilled the earth.

Polly was free to achieve her ambition.

III.

She was among the first to apply to one of the women's land organisations in London for a job.

'I don't know if I'll do,' she said modestly to the masculine lady in khaki with a fox's tooth for tie-pin who sat in the bureau.

'Oh, you'll do all right, my peach,' replied the other with something of the snort of a hungry pig who has found a truffle at last.

Polly was drafted down into the man-drained country. With other like recruits she was told off to a big farm in the Sussex Weald; and from the start she found great favour in the eyes of old Mr. Ganmer, the farmer, not because of her beauty, but because of her strength.

'See that gal trot up a ladder with a hundud-weight o' corrun on her back!' he would say to the men left him—decrepit, invalid, or imbecile in the main. 'Make some o' you look a bit funny I should say.'

A short, burly man of immense girth, who carried his arms like fins a little way from his sides as though to give his body every chance to inflate, he was in no danger himself from the new hand.

'Ain't 'alf a beauty,' Mrs. Ganmer confided to her sister, 'but

doesn't know it. Nor doesn't Ephraim, and I doesn't tell him. So I got no cause to worrit. And can't she just work ?'

'Just as well Gus ain't here,' remarked her sister, a sour woman, unmated herself, who disliked her nephew with her whole heart. 'She'd fall to him.'

Her handsome son was the darling of Mrs. Ganmer's heart.

'He'd fall to her more like,' she retorted sharply. 'But he'll never see her. He's off to France next draft. Told me so in his last.' She gulped.

Polly did in fact see the hero. Towards the end of 1917 he came to Ketch's to say good-bye. His father confided to Polly with a twinkle that it was by no means the first time he had come on the same errand.

The yeoman paid no heed to the girl, or indeed to anybody else.

'Sunk in 'issalf, Gus be,' Mr. Ganmer told the girl. His son amused Mr. Ganmer. 'Feels it so. Wants me to send in a hap-pelication to say I can't spare him off o' the farm.' He shook his rosy old face. 'Such a soldier our Gus were in time o' peace. You wouldn't believe! Oh dear! Goin' to Ulster in them days, he were, along o' Carson and the Dook to see if he couldn't find somebody to work it off on. But when the Germans pop up across the water and arsted for it, accardin' to Gussy it ain't war at all—not by the Yeomanry rules any way—it's just a bloody slaughter, and the police oughter stop it!'

Gus went quietly—tearfully, some of the hands said; and nobody saw him go. But this time he did cross the seas. There was no doubt of that.

'Gus has got to the front,' the old farmer told Polly with slow gusto. 'He's wrote from this here Cairo—where the Pharaoh is. And if I know Gus they won't get him much nearer it. Terrible time he's having by all accounts. Oh, shockin!'

Polly was the one of his team of land-girls to whom the old man sometimes talked. He didn't think much of the rest.

'One good egg in every basket o' addleds—that's land girls,' was a favourite saying of his.

IV.

Ketch's was a big farm; and Polly was one of several girls like unto herself working on it. She and two friends dossed in a cottage

together, doing for themselves. All day they laboured ; and in the evenings, over their cocoa and sardines, talked and planned and dreamed of that delicious paradise which awaited us all in those days and went by the name of *When-the-War-is-over*. Polly's place in that paradise and that of her two pals, Tommy and Dick, as she called them, was to be a farm that they were to run between them with ducks and geese and golden sunshine, with hens that always laid, pigs that always paid, and cows that never died ; where there were no rates, tithes, and taxes, and above all no Government regulations.

Those last two years of the War were good days on the whole for all three, especially for Polly : steady work, steady growth of body and soul, steady pay, and the kind of sober excitement that we may suppose animates a healthy young tree planted at last in a congenial soil and making the most of its advantages. But like other good things it came to an end at last. Armistice Day threw its shadow, at first no bigger than a man's hand, across the sunny paths of Polly and many such as she.

At first she rejoiced at the finish of the War. Then the men began to trickle home, demanding their places loudly.

The carter, desperately wounded in Gough's great battle, was the first to arrive. He had been hanging about Polly's horizon for some time : first a blue-clad invalid on crutches, who came over occasionally by char-à-banc from a Brighton hospital ; next a silent figure, still on crutches, in the door of one of Mr. Ganmer's cottages or pottering about among his bees. Then one dawn he appeared in the door of the stables where she was dressing down the mare : a sombre and resentful figure with a dreadful face and a limp.

'What is it ?' she asked kindly.

'Come for my 'orses,' the man announced, ran his eye over the mare with a disapproving air, and then began to make a minute inspection, in the most offensive manner possible, of the harness that hung upon the wall.

Happily at that moment Mr. Ganmer called her from the yard outside.

'I should ha' tall'd you,' he panted huskily. 'Didn't mean him to start till next week. But he's different to some of 'em, Muggeridge. A good man to work, but funny in the temper. Don't you go a-nigh him nor near his hosses—till he's used to you. I'll find you another little job. Yes, he went through it prarper in the War I believe,

Jesse did. Lost pretty nigh 'alf off o' one foot, and some of his jaw-bone, and most of a heye—not to say his wife and child. Oh dear !'

A week later Polly was working in the fields when Muggeridge limped by with the team. He stopped them, and made them stand out like horses at a show. He did not look at the girl, but realising that the exhibition was for her benefit she ceased her work.

'I hope you find them all right,' she said with the generosity that distinguished her.

'Better'n what I expacted,' he answered and moved on his way. And she understood that this was his amend, carefully planned without a doubt.

A few days later the little carter had to take the two-horse team in to the station. Polly was told off to go into market with the mare and the light cart.

He watched her harness the mare, then came over to her, and showed her the right way of fastening the hames. She had been doing it for two years, and, it now appeared, doing it wrong.

'Thank you,' she said.

He eyed her grimly ; one side of his sunburnt face handsome, the other, eye and all, damaged beyond repair. He was grinning at her, mocking her. 'Better be 'alf give over,' he said. 'See you doosn't knaw nawthin at all about it—and never will by my rackonin'.'

Polly snorted and trembled.

Give over indeed !

That was what all the men were after—to get the girls off the land, and make jobs for themselves.

Next day Mr. Ganmer came to her in the yard. He looked troubled. When the old man had anything unpleasant to communicate he had a way of arranging himself broadside on to his listener and looking away over the fields.

'Gus is comin' 'ome,' he announced, rummaging in his mouth with a huge forefinger. 'Last acrost the seas, and fust 'ome again. That's our Gus !' He rumbled heavily away.

A few weeks later the old man was with her as she was hedging and dyking in Four-horse Pasture when the sound of a car tearing up to the farm was heard, accompanied with loud whoops and tally-hos. The old man spudded diligently.

'That's Gus, that is. See the conkerink 'ero come ! and mind don't miss it, or you'll have mother on to you.'

V.

The news sounded like a knell in Polly's heart.

'We shall get the boot,' she told Dick. 'No room for you and me on the land. We've saved the country, and now we've got to go. It's all this Peace.'

Tommy, the one of her two pals she liked best, had gone already, claimed by her returned man.

Dick did not take the matter as hardly as her friend. Indeed, she was far too intrigued by the handsome yeoman even to be depressed. She found the hero very fetchin with his stories, his glories, and his cheery militarist manner; jaunting about the tumbledown old place in his smart horsey clothes, hat a-cock, cigar in mouth, chaffing the girls, and finding fault with the men.

He had been, it seemed, both galloper and confidential adviser to Allenby in the great drive that swept the Turk from Palestine.

'Whipped 'em all the way from Dan to Beersheba *and* beyond!' he would say. 'Talk about no use for cavalry in modern War! *My* Gad!'

Polly was not so impressed as Dick appeared to be. Indeed a week after Gus's return she gave his father notice.

Mr. Ganmer threw a sharp glance at the girl.

'I know,' he said moodily. 'No need to tall me.'

Next day he came to her in the field where she was hoeing.

'Gooin' back to the town when you leave me, Missie?' he asked.

'Never,' answered Polly with a firmness that was almost ferocious.

'What than?'

'I shall stay on the land somehow. If I can't get a job I shall take a small farm—if I can find one.'

He eyed her shrewdly.

'You could never manage alone—house and land. Too much altogedder that'd be, even for you.'

'Not alone,' she answered. 'Miss van der Meersch and I. She's keen.'

Miss van der Meersch was Dick.

Old Ganmer shook his head. He had never thought a nation deal of Miss 'Jones,' as he had always called the girl with the Dutch name.

He mused.

'Would Chalk Farm suit you, I wonder? It's fallin' in, Lady-day. It's not much. Only thing it's cheap—and not too fur—so hap I might lend you a hand times.'

Polly knew the farm and was not enthusiastic, but next Sunday she went over with Dick to prospect. She found the place much as Mr. Ganmer had described it—a derelict hill-farm lying forlorn and gray in a coombe of the Downs. The land was poor and backward; water there was none save from the roofs—neither wells, nor dew-ponds, nor stream. An unmetalled lane, that must be greasy as a soaped sponge in winter, led up to the farm. The buildings consisted of stables with two rooms over them, cow-shed, piggeries, and a many-bayed flint barn.

Polly realised all the disadvantages, and her courage sank. To her amazement, however, Dick, the faint-hearted, proved enthusiastic. She clutched her pal by the arm.

'My dear, it's just us—you and I!—I can see us here.'

Polly with twice the balance of her friend, and a growing sense of agricultural values, allowed herself to be overborne.

The decision made, old Ganmer proved himself helpful. When the day of parting came he lent the girls Jesse Muggeridge and the light cart. The cart was piled with truck, old hen-coops, a watering-trough, sacks, a barrel, and all the accumulated oddments of a great farm, invaluable to beginners, that the old man had given as his parting present. Polly in breeches and gaiters sat on the top of the load.

Just as the cart was starting a face appeared at the window above the porch. It was Gus pulling at the handsome moustache with which he did his lady-killing.

'Goodbye, Poll,' he purred; and there was something singularly offensive about the abbreviation of the name. 'Glad you're not going far.'

The carter gurgled; the cart started; Mr. and Mrs. Ganmer waved.

Once out of the yard the man at the mare's head turned.

'Ain't worritin on you, is he?'

'Who?'

'Gussy.'

The man's impudence staggered the girl, and his patronage was intolerable.

A carter too!

Perched up on her hen-coop throne she ignored him loftily.

He plodded along in the mud, hatefully unconscious that he was being put in his place.

'Tall me if he do,' he continued. 'I knows Gus. And Gus knows me. Should do anyway, I rackon.'

VI.

It was immediately after Polly and her friend had settled down in Chalk Farm that Miss Spencer crossed their path.

She came of what Polly called with awe a 'caounty' family, and was astonishingly different from what the 'pictures' had always led her to imagine such a person must be. Miss Spencer was real, and possessed in marked degree the admirable hardness that marks reality in every sphere of nature.

But if she came of a different class from Polly, her history was not unlike that of her new friend. Up to the War she had been an artist with an intense feeling for the earth but no intimate contact with it. Her father's illness and subsequent death had called her home to the management of the estate during her brother's absence at the Front. She had dropped her easel for the ploughshare and wrestled with the earth she had so often painted. Like Polly she had found herself at the task, and at the close of the War had bought herself a little old Elizabethan farm and thirty acres where she now pig-farmed.

Twenty years older than Polly, she took from the start a sympathetic interest in the struggles of the young cockney and her friend.

The two pals started on their venture at Lady-day. They bought a cow, and retailed the milk in the valley below, taking it round the cottages in cans slung over the handle-bars of their bicycles. Soon they were able to add a pig to their stock, and later hens and even geese.

Through the summer they prospered, though the water at one period even in a wet season caused some anxiety. Polly did most of the work; Dick supplied the gaiety and lighter touches.

Old Mr. Ganmer did not help as much as Polly had anticipated; but that, as Miss Spencer pointed out with characteristic truthfulness, was probably because Polly had expected too much. But the old man *did* help, as the little lady discovered when June came, and, her own hay carried, she came along on her bicycle, rake on

shoulder, and young Bowzer, her bob-tail, at heel, to lend the girls a hand. She found the little carter with the slashed face and the limp working stolidly and in silence, raking, pitching, loading. All day the four laboured. At tea Miss Spencer and the two girls retired into the barn. From there they heard voices. Polly peeped out and retired as swiftly. For once there was a look of something like fear on the girl's face. Miss Spencer rose to see.

Gus Ganmer was taking off his coat. At first Miss Spencer thought he was preparing to fight the little carter.

'You can go back to Ketch's,' he was saying. 'I'll see to this.'

'Aren't a-goin',' replied the other, quite unmoved and raking steadily. 'Got my orders and gooin' to abide by 'em.'

Gus advanced on the little man.

At that moment Miss Spencer marched on to the field. Miss Spencer never walked—though she danced beautifully—she marched. Small and spare, but big of bone, all through the countryside she had an almost legendary reputation for ferocity and brute strength. Gus knew her well, and her reputation. He saw her coming and touched his hat.

'What ye want?' she asked harshly.

'Only came to see if I could lend the lydies a hand, Miss.'

'No, ye can't.'

Gus blinked, aggrieved and haughty, pulling his moustache.

'No offence, I'm sure,' he said. 'I didn't know I was doing wrong in hofferin my services.'

'Muggeridge is giving us all the help we need,' replied Miss Spencer remorselessly.

Gus put on his coat in dudgeon and turning looked over the little lady's shoulders in the direction of the barn.

'See you again later, pretty Poll,' he called with a chuckling leer. 'Pretty Poll!'

Miss Spencer stopped to supper. She showed herself moody so long as Dick was present. When at length left alone with Polly she asked over her cigarette the question she had stayed to put.

'Does young Ganmer come up here often?'

'Pretty well.'

'What happens?'

'I leave him to Dick.' Polly blew rings. 'I think she likes it.'

That amused Miss Spencer, who had always contrasted Dick

unfavourably with her splendid mate. Grimly she wondered whether it amused Gus Ganmer too.

If it had ever amused that worthy the day was soon to come when it ceased to do so.

Dick flounced into the common bedroom of the two girls one evening.

'It's you he's after,' she told her friend with a smothered sob. 'He doesn't want me. He told me so—brutally.'

'Thank you. You can tell him I don't want him,' said Polly grandly.

'Tell him yourself,' snapped Dick. 'I'm not your servant, though I know you think I am.'

That was the first rift in the lute, and came with the early autumn days. As the winter closed in Dick grew increasingly restive. Something of the stoicism of the land had laid its grip on Polly's heart. At first she refused to notice the change in her friend.

She laboured about the farm alone with mud up to her knees and came in tired of evenings, to find a sulking young woman who had not even made tea and sat over the fire brooding on the shining pavements of the towns and the golden ladders thrown across them by the lamps as you went with your boy, after work, to the pictures.

Then one December day Miss Spencer, climbing the hill, found her friend alone.

'Dick has gone,' said Polly simply.

'Good riddance,' answered Miss Spencer. 'But she's let you down pretty badly.'

Polly's soul was large as her body. She cherished no resentment at the action of her defaulting mate.

'Oh, I don't know,' she said. 'See, she lost interest when she found Gus wasn't after her. Seemed it soured her against me too like. Of course I miss her. But I told her best go if she wasn't happy.'

The lady glanced at the big girl sitting on a truss of hay in her unkempt beauty.

'I don't like you to be all alone up here,' she said, 'specially this time of year.'

'See, I got to be,' replied Polly philosophically. 'I got the farm on my hands; and there are the animals.'

'You can't get a pal?' asked Miss Spencer.

'No girl'd come—in the summer. And I don't want the

other sort. They'd come all right, some of 'em. Only got to put my head out of the window and whistle same as for a taxi.' For once she was bitter.

Miss Spencer turned sharply.

'Does *he* come up after you?'

Polly nodded.

Strong upon her was the haunting horror all lonely women know—the fear of the predatory male.

'He comes up most nights after market when he's a bit on. Sometimes he holloas and shouts and rampages at the door. Sometimes he's quiet and just snuffles round in the darkness like a great bear. I like that worst.' Her brave spirit surmounted her fears. She laughed. 'But I know he can't get me when I'm up there.' She nodded to the rooms above the stables.

Miss Spencer inspected the girl's defences. The only way into the citadel was up a ladder in the stables that led to a trap-door in the floor, which could be bolted down from above. The position was certainly secure.

'Yes, you're all right once you're up there,' said the elder woman.

'So long as he don't catch me at dusk before I'm home,' said Polly. 'I have to be in by four these dark days for fear.'

Then one evening at dusk not long after, he did catch her—in the wood-shed when she was chopping wood. She had dallied too long, and was just putting down her axe when she heard his dawdling step crossing the yard. From the drag of his feet she knew he was a little drunk. Face to face with the crisis of her life she manned herself to meet it. Happily for Polly she came of the class that has to fight for its life from the cradle to the grave as surely as any creature of the wilderness.

Quietly she went on chopping. He stood in the door. She could see his great boots and gaitered legs. Then he laughed.

She glanced up friendly, feigning pleased surprise. The excellence of her acting amazed her.

'That you, Mr. Ganmer?'

'Yush, that's Gush.'

There was silence, and the darkness fell. He was sucking some kind of sweet, and in the silence she could hear him slobbering. It was revolting, terrifying, somehow significant.

'Alone now, ain't you?' came the thick voice.

'Only for Miss Spencer.'

The blow went home.

'Is *she* living here?' He was staggered clearly.

Polly chopped away with admirable nonchalance.

'She'll be back any minute if you want to see her,' she said.

'Won't you wait?'

It was a good lie, well and truly told, and served its purpose nobly. Gus slunk away into the night faster than he had come.

When she heard the gate click, Polly, axe in hand, dashed across the yard to the stable, banged and bolted the door, rushed up the ladder with a muffled scream, slammed the trap-door behind her, and flinging herself upon the bed, sobbed.

Next day the postman brought her a card.

You — little liar, it ran. I'll make you sweat for this Thursday.

Polly showed the message to Miss Spencer, who had come on from market early in the afternoon with young Bowzer.

'I shall stop the night with you,' said the little lady firmly.

'I saw the beast at market. He was half-seas over then.'

The daughter of a distinguished soldier, she possessed herself in no small degree the natural capacity for defensive tactics of the sex whose life is largely passed standing a siege.

'You go up aloft, my cherub, and get supper,' she said. 'This is my show.'

In the dusk she planted a ladder against the wall of the barn; mixed a bucket of weed-poison; left Bowzer in the stable and locked up.

Then she laboured upstairs with her bucket and syringe.

Polly, cooking in the kitchen, was amused.

'What's in the bucket?' she asked.

'Never mind,' said Miss Spencer. 'You're just a good little gal who knows nothing. I'm in charge here.'

She left the blind undrawn in the bedroom and lighted the lamp. Then she looked out. The moon already topped the barn and fell on the ladder leaning innocent but conspicuous against a neighbouring wall.

'Good,' she said, and tramping to the trap-door looked down on young Bowzer already curled in the straw beneath. 'Go to sleep, old lad,' she called, and shut the trap-door.

Then she established herself at the window in the bedroom, bucket at her side, and syringe in hand.

The plot worked to perfection.

The gate creaked. Uncertain feet crossed the yard. She

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heard her man go to the ladder and arrange it under the window she had left wide to the mild and brilliant night. Then she turned out the lamp. Beneath the window she could hear him in the stillness, fumbling and swearing, as he planted the ladder with clumsy stealth.

Then feet began to mount. Her hand gripped the syringe, and withdrew it, charged and dripping, from the bucket.

A head and heavy shoulders appeared at the window against the starlit background of the night. A smell of alcohol invaded the room. Miss Spencer sat quiet as a watching cat.

'Got you this time. I'll learn you to play it up on Gus,' came the thick voice. He mounted another rung. 'I can see you. And I'll see more of you prazently.' He got a knee on to the sill and blocked the window. 'You're for it this time, no fear, my beauty. Mum still is it? You wait, Miss Mousey. I'll make you squeak!'

The voice that met him was not the voice that he expected. It was different in its texture, finer, firmer.

'Is that you, Mr. Ganmer?' it said cordially.

A blinding volley crashed in the invader's face. He fell off the ladder with a gasp, and lay in the flower-bed beneath in huddled ruin.

Miss Spencer leaned out above him.

'Is that you, Mr. Ganmer?' she asked again with joyous venom, and poured the contents of the bucket on to the prostrate figure. And it was characteristic of her that she hurled the bucket after its contents with deadly aim.

'That's all of *that*, I'm sorry to say,' she added.

The man, lying beneath the ladder, woke to spasmodic life, wriggled desperately clear of the debris, and crawled out into the yard.

Then he rose to his feet and stood, both hands to his eyes, like a great blubbering boy, gasping, confounded, drenched.

'You blinded me, you ——!' he bawled, shaking his fist. 'Lost both —— eye-sights because of you! I'll make you stand for this afore the Bench, I will.'

Miss Spencer leaned out. For once she was sweet.

'I shall have to run you in for attempted house-breaking, Mr. Ganmer,' she called. 'Also for using language calculated to collect a crowd.'

She smiled out on to the wide spaces of the night and the desolate smooth hillside over which a white owl swooped hooting

in the moonlight. She was not quite sure of her terminology, but her father had been a magistrate; and her last phrase had a familiar and resounding ring which gratified her as much as it appeared to infuriate the baffled male.

He ran like a bull at the stable-door and began to bang and kick it furiously.

'Just coming, Mr. Ganmer,' called the little lady cheerfully. 'One moment!'

She rushed through the kitchen, unheeding of Polly, down the ladder and into the stable.

'Hi, boy! Bowzer boy! Hi, at him—tear him! Tease him! Loo, loo, loo!'

Young Bowzer, a gigantic ragamuffin, with the coat of a bear and the heart of a lion, game always to fight with anything from a bee to a bull, launched to the battle with a roar of glee.

VII.

Next Thursday Miss Spencer was aware of a faint buzz of excitement and a turning of heads when she appeared at market.

Then old Mr. Ganmer rolled up to her with twinkling eye.

'Mother's comin' arter you, Miss,' he told her with slow glee. 'Spoilt her darling, you have. Squirt him in the eyeball with the liquid manure, didn't you? That's right.' He was pleased and purring like a well-fed tom-cat after a meal. 'Then let loose a pack o' tigers kep' a-puppus on him. And for finish one o' my chaps, 'alf his size, give him a bloody nose all for 'issalf for talkin' pussy-talk about somebury—don't know who. Goin' to 'ave you up afore the Lord Chancellor of all England, our Gus is. Oah, here he comes!'

Miss Spencer saw the damaged hero driving at her and stood her ground.

Then a little figure in the russet of a carter emerged from the crowd.

'Better be 'alf let be, Gus,' it said quietly. 'You doosn't want no more of it, doos you?'

The bully faded away like a bad dream.

The little carter turned to the lady. It occurred to her that his damaged eye was slightly more skew-wise than usual.

'You're all right,' he told her. 'Our Gus don't fight. Too proud, I expagt.'

VIII.

After that Miss Spencer whenever she could spare an hour from her own work found her way to the lonely hill-farm. And she noticed that she was welcomed with a warmth that was pathetic, speaking as it did of the forlornness and the struggles of this young creature bred amid crowds.

A genuine friendship sprang up between the grim little lady and the gorgeous young beauty, twenty years her junior. The elder woman gave herself wholeheartedly to buttressing the girl; and she found Polly always graver, always working, slowly achieving the mastery of her four acres.

'I see you're coming out on top,' she said one day, throwing an approving eye about her. 'You've got the hang of it all wonderfully. I sometimes wonder if it is in your blood.'

She lifted her strong kind face to the girl. Polly blushed. Then all in a hurry she pulled the family skeleton out of the cupboard for her friend to see—the Man with the Carter's Whip.

The shameful secret once blurted out, the girl of course regretted her indiscretion. She had been disloyal both to herself and worse still to her family. As she sat there hang-dog and in dudgeon, her friend's firm voice, characteristically earnest, came in upon her to disperse her gloom.

'But I don't see why he shouldn't have been a carter—if he was a *good* carter.'

'Oh, but it's so *low*!' cried Polly. 'Common—I call it, like Jesse Muggeridge.'

That evening as she was seeing her visitor on her homeward way after dark, they met a man coming over the swell of the Downs and making evidently for the farm. He nodded at the two women, but did not speak.

'Who's that?' asked Miss Spencer.

'Old Better-be-'alf,' replied the girl. 'Name o' Muggeridge, I believe.' She mimicked the Sussex speech with derisive bitterness.

'What's he want?'

The answer came grudgingly.

'Comes up to sit with *her* every night, I suppose.' She referred clearly to the invalid in the cowshed, one Dairymaid, whom Miss Spencer had been called in to see. 'He's plenty to do without my work. But he *will* come, and he *won't* take pay.'

'Why shouldn't he come?' asked the other.

'Because he depresses me so,' burst out the girl. 'Always sings the same old doleful ditty—My work is *main* bad, and I'd better give *he* up *better be 'alf*. Besides,' she added savagely, 'he's hideous.'

That shocked Miss Spencer, who was not easily shocked.

'Oh, Polly! how can you, when you think! Those *glorious scars*!'

Polly wept suddenly.

'I know,' she sobbed. 'I can't help it,' and fled into the night.

The storm had passed when next Miss Spencer called, and Dairymaid had been saved.

'That,' said the visitor significantly, as she inspected the late invalid, 'is good nursing and nothing else.'

'Yes,' admitted Polly sombrely.

She was silent for once, almost sullen. It was clear to her friend that in the depths of the girl some fierce conflict was taking place. Polly was fighting now something other than mere loneliness.

Miss Spencer soon left, for once unaccompanied.

On her way off the hill she met the little carter actively limping up the chalk-lane she herself was descending. She eyed him with new interest. A wiry little fellow, with the face of the born husbandman, and son of generations of such sons of the earth, he was in rough working-kit of brown cord with an old jacket, threadbare and patched, much the hue and texture of the hillside he was mounting. His long carter's fore-lock, in marked distinction to the rest of his closely-cropped head, betrayed his exact calling, and his damaged face his noble record.

As he passed Miss Spencer he tossed her a nod, and she noted his good eye, black-brown, soft, and with a covert twinkle in it. It was clear that she amused him. That did not disturb her. She amused all the men.

Once past her, he stopped and called.

She turned.

'Yes?'

'Gone,' he said, and jerked mysteriously over his shoulder.

'Who?'

'Gus.'

'A good job too,' said Miss Spencer forcibly.

'Ah,' replied the little carter in his most non-committal manner. 'Horsetralia, I did y'ear tall.'

Miss Spencer tramped on her way.

'Good luck,' she said, and caught herself up with horror. She had meant to say good-night.

IX.

Polly was now making way, though much like a heavy-laden barge against a choppy tide. Her pigs were paying, as was the weekly basket of eggs. She had three caows, as she called them, which fed on the short thyme-sweetened grass, and in rough weather lay in the loo'th of the hill amid the scrub.

But though achieving material victory, the tenant of Chalk Farm was coming to the end of her spiritual resources. Her loneliness, indeed, was growing upon the girl, invading her, obsessing her; and the cheap gramophone which she had bought at a farm-sale did not bring her the comfort she had hoped. The Downs that stared in at her bedroom window grew more unfriendly; and the storms came leaping down them and howled about the farm in the hollow like a pack of wolves. On the rare quiet nights she would sometimes lie awake for hours listening to the rats in the barn, legions of them, playing Prussians amid her scanty stores of cake.

'I suppose old Ganmer won't put you down a concrete floor?' said the practical Miss Spencer.

'He won't do a blessed thing,' answered Polly. 'He won't even dig me a well.'

'That's far the most important,' Miss Spencer agreed. She knew that the farm was entirely dependent on one small tank filled by rain from the roof of the barn. 'A dry summer might do you in.'

When summer came again with cloudless days and dewless nights she proved tragically right. In the Weald the ponds dried up and the storage tanks emptied. Lucky the possessor of a good well or a brook for the cattle. Polly had neither. Her solitary tank was called upon to supply both her needs and that of the farmyard. And no one who has not dragged water daily up a hill from far realises how much a thirsty hen will drink, let alone a cow; nor the misery of seeing beasts filing hopefully to an empty trough and waiting there patiently for the gush of living water from the pump that does not come.

Then one evening Miss Spencer found Polly for the first time

in tears. Jesse Muggeridge had told her that morning *as how no one but a fool* would take a farm without a water supply.

'So helpful,' said Miss Spencer savagely.

Just then a cow in the cowshed mooded, and there was a sudden fluster amid the hens in the droughty yard. Outside was a clanking and pleasant slip-slop of water. Miss Spencer looked out. Muggeridge, whip on shoulder, was plodding across the down-land towards the farm, leading an ancient horse which was pulling a battered water-cart.

Polly eyed his approach moodily.

'He brings it every day,' she said grudgingly, 'after his work. I can't stop him. I can't even sye thank-you to him, because all he ever answers is—*Better be 'alf spill it on the ground.*'

She slipped indoors as the man came to the gate.

A few evenings later as Miss Spencer was locking up at home, she heard a knock at the door. In the dark she recognised Muggeridge.

'She's ill a-bed,' he remarked curtly. 'Wants a woman to her, I reck'n. Won't let I fend for she. Thart best let you know.'

The village nurse refused to undertake the case. How could she with this epidemic of measles among the children on her hands deal with a solitary patient two miles away on the top of an impossible hill! Polly therefore was removed to the cottage-hospital.

There Miss Spencer went to see her.

Polly was not fretting, she found to her surprise. Indeed, it seemed to her that the girl was almost too complacent, even a little inflated.

'What about the stock?' she asked critically.

Miss Spencer's thoughts always flew first to the animals—those helpless babies of her world.

'They're all right, I do assure you,' answered Polly with aggressive nonchalance.

Miss Spencer, who left few things to chance, rode over to Chalk Farm to see for herself. The animals were all right; and it was not hard to see why. Jesse Muggeridge was clanking about the yard with a yoke on his shoulders and buckets spilling water suspended from both ends of it.

When she called again at the cottage-hospital on Sunday, she met the little carter coming away. He grinned outright at her, one side of his face dreadful, the other beautiful.

'You'll be the next, I expagt,' he said, shouldering by. 'Empty cot alongside her'n waitin' for ye.'

Miss Spencer entered to find the patient better and, for once, perched upon the high horse.

'You asked me about the stock, Miss Spencer,' she said in the high-falutin, la-di-da accent of the Tottenham young lady in her more aristocratic mood. 'They're all right, I thank you. *Mister Muggeridge* is seeing to them.'

There was a marked emphasis on the title.

'I should think they're glad,' said Miss Spencer acridly. 'So am I.'

Polly, her effort made, came off the perch which had never suited her, and became at once her sunny and natural self.

'I'm going back Tuesday,' she told her friend. 'I'll be all right now, you'll see.' She was arch, chuckling, mysterious.

X.

When Miss Spencer called at the farm a week later she marked a change the moment she was through the gate. The yard was orderly. She peeped into the barn: it had been organised. A noise in the cowshed attracted her: she looked in. *Muggeridge* was just placing the milking-stool. It was only four o'clock.

'Hullo, you here already, *Muggeridge*!' she said.

He stared thoughtfully at *Dairymaid*.

'Ya-as,' he said. 'Reckon I'm here, and like to be. Took over wid de fixtures I be.' He settled on the stool and bowed his head against the cow's flank. ''Twere altogedder too much for she. I tall her so from the start. Only o' coorse she know'd bettur. They doos most in general.'

Polly was in her room, 'quite the lady,' as she said. There were some flowers on the table, and a book at her side. She was sewing, and looked astonishingly handsome in a skirt and blouse. No explanations were asked or offered.

Polly took everything for granted and clearly expected her friend to do the same. At first she was a little brisk, even brusque by way of defence, but that soon wore off.

'We shall marry at once and make shift here for a bit till something better turns up,' she said. '*Jesse* says *'Tain't such a bad little place arter all; only it wants a man on it.'*

'Better be 'alf,' said Miss Spencer.

THE PHLEGMATIC ENGLISHMAN IN THE COMMON LAW.

IN many problems of English Law the last word rests with an obscure person who is known to the law by a number of undistinguished titles. Lord Justice Bowen once called him 'the man on the Clapham omnibus.' Sometimes he is personified as John Doe or Richard Roe or John Styles, but more commonly nowadays simply as 'the reasonable man,' 'the average man,' or 'the ordinary man.' Perhaps the last title suits him best, for the quality which endears him most to judges is his imperturbable ordinariness.

Lawyers have to consider many aspects of his character. Here we are concerned only with one—his emotions and his sensibilities. They are 'English to the backbone.'

We shall expect to find him phlegmatic; but his British phlegm has a very distinct admixture of choler. Our Law looks askance at provocation; it is at most not a defence but an extenuation. For example, we know nothing of the 'unwritten law' which wholly justifies revenge upon adultery, 'the highest invasion of property,' as it is called, somewhat materialistically, in an old case. But 'wild justice' done upon the love-thief has from early times been recognised as a powerful extenuation of homicide, provided it be done in the heat of blood and not as a calculated retribution; and it is notorious that with many juries it is practically equivalent to a defence. But John Styles must not be quick to wrath. Names will never hurt him, and he is not justified in retorting with a deadly blow to a mere insult, however grievous. Sticks and stones are a different matter. Lay a finger on him, and he is, like Fluellen, 'hot as gunpowder'; his aggressor must not be surprised if he is made to eat the leek, skin and all, to the accompaniment of bloody coxcombs.

Some of the old cases carry this kind of provocation to a great length. Perhaps the most remarkable is one recorded by Foster in his *Crown Cases*, from a manuscript report of a trial at the Old Bailey in 1704:

'There being an affray in the streets, one Stedman, a foot-soldier, ran hastily towards the combatants. A woman seeing him run in that manner cried out, 'You will not murder the man, will

you?' Stedman replied, "What is that to you, you——?" The woman thereupon gave him a box on the ear, and Stedman struck her on the breast with the pommel of his sword. The woman then fled, and Stedman pursuing her stabbed her in the back. Holt was at first of opinion that this was murder, *a single box on the ear from a woman not being sufficient provocation to kill in this manner, after he had given her a blow in return for the box on the ear.*¹ And it was proposed to have the matter found special.² But it afterwards appearing in the progress of the trial that the woman struck the soldier in the face with an iron patten, and drew a great deal of blood, it was held clearly to be no more than manslaughter. The smart of the man's wound and the effusion of blood might possibly keep his indignation boiling to the moment of the fact.'

At the present day, it can hardly be supposed that even a blow in the face with an iron patten would extenuate this brutal butchery. Manners have to some degree improved, it is to be hoped; possibly not because of an improvement in the common clay of Styles (a thing which all our modern pundits tell us is disproved), but because he no longer carries a lethal weapon at his side. The readiness and ferocity with which swords were used when they were a common article of apparel is illustrated by the case of *The King v. Tranter and Reason* in 1722:

'Mr. Lutterel being arrested for a small debt prevailed on one of the officers to go with him to his lodgings, while the other was sent to fetch the Attorney's bill, in order, as Lutterel pretended, to have the debts and costs paid. Words arose at the lodgings about *Civility Money* which Lutterel refused to give; and went upstairs pretending to fetch money for the payment of debt and costs, leaving the officer below. He soon returned with a brace of loaded pistols in his bosom, which at the importunity of his servant he laid on the table saying, *He did not intend to hurt the officers, but he would not be ill-used.* The officer who had been sent for the Attorney's bill soon returned to his companion at the lodgings, and words of anger arising, Lutterel struck one of the officers on the face with a walking cane, and drew a little blood. Whereupon both of them fell upon him, one stabbed him in nine places, *he all the while on the ground begging for mercy and unable to resist them.* And one of them fired one of the pistols at him *while on the ground* and gave him his death wound. This is reported to have been manslaughter by reason of the first assault with the cane.'

¹ Italics reproduced.

² I.e., a special verdict of homicide in self-defence, which at this period meant a pardon as a matter of course, but nevertheless involved forfeiture of property.

From which it would appear that a blow with a cane is sufficient provocation for a murderous assault, two to one, with swords and pistols. But this is going much too far even for the eighteenth century. Foster, who reports the case, is dissatisfied with it, and explains that on an examination of the evidence it appears that there was some ground for thinking that Lutterel was the aggressor, or at all events the threatener, with his sword.

It is clear from many old cases that the Courts were disposed to regard leniently the escapades of revellers who, flown with insolence and wine, made too free use of their swords. The kind of quarrel which might arise from a trivial occasion and lead to fatal results is illustrated by the trial, in 1688, of Walters, Bradshaw, and Cave for the killing of Sir Charles Pymm. The deceased had gone to dine with some friends at the Swan Tavern, Fish-street-hill, where Walters and his friends were also dining. One party was upstairs and the other downstairs; one had beef and the other fish. One of Walters' party coveted the beef of the other diners, and a member of Pymm's party, apparently as a voluntary courtesy, sent up a plate of the meat, but ordered it to be charged to Walters. Walters' companions sent their thanks and drank the healths of the other party, who were entire strangers to them. Why the general good feeling was suddenly changed to anger does not appear; possibly it was because Walters did not realise until the bill was presented that he was to pay for the beef. At all events, when the two parties met in the entry to the tavern, an inquiry as to how they had enjoyed the beef led to sharp words from Walters and his friends, who by this time had drunk 'ten bottles among six.' Bradshaw, of Walters' faction, fell violently upon Pymm, who, however, got away into the street; but Walters followed him with threats and drawn sword. According to Walters' own account, he was himself wounded in the thigh, and it is not clear from the report who struck the first blow; but there is little doubt who was the aggressor, even though Pymm may well have struck first in self-defence. Walters ran him through, and, as he fell, took him by the nape of the neck, crying '—— — you, you are dead,' and beat his head upon the pavement. In the same ferocious frame of mind, when his attention was called to the sword sticking in his victim's body, his only remark was, '—— — him, let it stay in his guts.'

The lenience with which the judges viewed the 'frolic' of these vulgar roysterers will sound strange to modern ears. The words

of Mr. Baron Jenner read almost like an apology for the prisoner's sprightly manners. He said, in charging the jury: 'The next step is, here is nothing that can impute a general malice upon Mr. Walters; for if I had no design to kill a man, and kill another with whom I do not quarrel, that cannot be any premeditated malice; but I rather think there was a little heat of wine amongst them; and this whole action was carried on by nothing else but a hot and sudden frolic, and I am very sorry that it should fall upon such a worthy gentleman as he was. And if there was no malice premeditated, then can he be found guilty of nothing but manslaughter.' The jury, unable to reconcile the direction in law with their own view of the prisoner's conduct, returned to Court, and expressed it as 'upon their conscience' that Walters, by his savage conduct, had shown a deliberate intent to kill; and they were plainly prepared to find him guilty of murder. But the Court in solemn language put them upon their oaths as jurors to find the accused guilty only of manslaughter, and they returned a verdict accordingly, though with evident reluctance.

Violence done to a man's kith and kin is almost as dangerous as violence done to himself. Defence of family and property fall within the same category as self-defence; and one case at least seems to show that the sight of his son's bleeding nose may arouse primitive passions in the breast of John Styles. It is reported by Coke:

'Two boys combating together, and one of them was scratched in the face, and his nose voided a great quantity of blood, and so he ran three-quarters of a mile to his father, who, seeing his son so abused, and the blood run from him, and his cloaths and face all bloody, he took in his hand a cudgell, and went three-quarters of a mile to the place where the other boy was, and struck him upon the head, upon which he died. And this was held but manslaughter, for the ire and passion of the father was continued, and there was no time that the law can determine that it was so settled, that it shall be adjudged in law malice prepense.'

Foster disapproves of the decision as reported, and explains it on the ground that the father used only 'a little cudgell,' intending to chastise, but no more. The decision as it stands is certainly barbarous according to modern notions.

Though provocative words do not excuse a blow, they may be expected to draw a retort. If charges are made against a man, and rebuttal involves a counter-defamation upon the accuser, this

is an occasion of qualified privilege. If, however, he is merely provoked by antecedent libels to publish counter-libels which have no relevance to the original charge, this is no defence, though it may be a mitigation of damages. That provocation is highly important in the law of defamation is shown by the now somewhat unprofitable distinction between civil and criminal libel. The latter is based on the notion that it is calculated to cause a breach of the peace; hence Lord Mansfield's aphorism, 'the greater the truth the greater the libel,' though it startled his contemporaries, was fully true until the passing of Lord Campbell's Act in 1843, which made truth a defence in criminal libel, provided it could be shown that the defamatory statement was not only true but in the public interest. May we not see in the old theory a relic of duelling days? *The more true the defamation, the more likely it was to provoke reprisals.* When Styles wore a sword, it was expected of him by society that he would challenge his traducer to personal combat. On the Continent to-day, in certain classes of society, the same standard prevails. But in England Styles has long given up these notions of 'honour.' Detractors are not often horsewhipped, and argument by fisticuffs is a privilege reserved to Members of Parliament. It is absurd to say nowadays that a libel imports a danger of bloodshed, and the law would suffer no great loss if the distinction between civil and criminal libel were wholly abolished.

In all these matters it will be seen that Styles is no craven, to take an injury meekly. The Christian precept of turning the other cheek finds no place in our law. And being no craven, the average man is expected to show a certain degree of 'firmness and courage' in situations of difficulty.

Suppose three or more persons assemble near him to carry out a common purpose in a forcible manner: will he be dismayed? If he is, then the assembly becomes a riot or rout: if he is not, then the assembly may be unlawful, but it is not a riot subject to the special penalties for that offence. A riot, to be such, must be *in terrorem populi*, which means simply *in terrorem Iohannis Styles*. What is a reasonable cause for alarm in this firm and courageous man? The presence of dangerous or unusual weapons, 'the show of armour, threatening speeches, or turbulent gestures': even the presence of an entirely good-humoured but high-spirited crowd, who, in rejoicing at the declaration of peace, are determined to have fuel for bonfires, if necessary at the cost of demolishing

adjoining property. But if the good-humoured crowd assembled merely to halloo at Styles, or to jog his elbow facetiously as he sat writing, he must preserve his sense of humour, he must not fly into a rage—'for the purpose must be unlawful.'

The degree of firmness and courage demanded of Styles is not excessively high. 'You have no right,' says a learned judge, 'to expect men to be something more than ordinary men.' If you suddenly confront Styles with an unforeseen danger, you cannot expect him necessarily to act with perfect *sang froid*. It may very well be a venial error of judgment, for example, to port instead of starboarding his helm when a collision is suddenly threatened through no fault of his own. Of course he must not give way to mere panic; the reasonable apprehension which causes him to act precipitately is the *metus non vani hominis, sed qui merito et in homine constantissimo cadat*. If he is confronted with two evils, he cannot be blamed if by bad judgment he chooses the greater: such evils as remaining upon the top of an apparently overturning coach, or making a jump for it; leaving his horses, which he wants to take out to water, in the stable, or leading them out across a risky but apparently passable ditch which has been wrongfully dug by another; being carried in the train beyond his destination, or getting out at a stopping place which is plainly inadequate, but the only one available. And he will be excused for choosing the worse alternative, if it merely seemed the better, though it was not so in fact: and for doing damage in emergency which seemed justified by necessity though the event proved it to be otherwise—e.g. damaging property to prevent the spread of fire, though it turned out that the fire could have been checked without such damage.

As for his sensibilities, the law considers Styles to be, if not quite *pachydermatous*, at least protected by a hide of serviceable toughness. He is not a neurotic who will shrink and wither at every aspersion cast upon him. His back is broad enough to bear a normal amount of hostile criticism; and therefore he cannot claim damages for 'mere pain of mind,' if he chooses to fret unduly about such criticism, or even abuse. This is the rule however exalted his reputation may be, and however tender he may be of it. All persons being equal before the law, it is as much a wrong to defame a navvy as a Cabinet Minister. The Romans had a different rule, and freely awarded damages proportionately to the dignity of a man's social standing (*ex dignitate*).

But in this matter practice hardly squares with the strict theory of equality before the law.

What is it that a man seeks to recover when he claims damages for injury to reputation? What is the nature of the damage alleged? The law of 'special damage' in slander—i.e. spoken as opposed to written defamation—has furnished some strange doctrines on this point. The law exactly reverses the principle 'who steals my purse steals trash,' etc. He who filches Styles' good name has done him no injury in law unless he has inflicted some 'material damage.' What is this material damage? The Courts and the public have been edified from time to time by the spectacle of counsel proving that their defamed clients have lost 'trash' in the shape of thus much tea and bread-and-butter which has been denied them because uncharitable friends have ceased to invite them to their houses. A man verbally slandered may claim for the loss of free meals, but not for mere loss of reputation as such. Loss of *consortium vicinorum*, loss of spiritual advantages, stigma in social clubs and circles, general social reprobation, and all the unhappiness of 'Coventry'—these are as naught; but a falling-off in invitations to dinner is a great matter. Before the passing of the Slander of Women Act, 1891, judges constantly referred with regret amounting to indignation to the fact that a woman whose chastity had been falsely impugned by spoken words had no remedy unless she could prove 'special damage.' Yet if the defamation takes a written as opposed to a spoken form, injury to reputation is in itself a sufficient head of damage. It cannot be pretended that this is a very satisfactory distinction. To begin with, it is by no means invariably true that the written is more damaging than the oral defamation; for the latter, passed from lip to lip, whispered in corners, and ever increasing snowball-fashion, may be more dangerous, because more insidious, than the printed lie which can be 'nailed down.' But even if it is considered that there should be a difference in the degree of damage, there should not be a difference in the kind. The substance of the action in both cases clearly is injury to reputation. And, artificial distinctions apart, the *gravamen* of injury to reputation is that it derogates from the esteem in which a man is held. Loss of esteem *does* involve pain of mind in any ordinary healthy person, and it is perfectly right and just not only that reputation should be vindicated, but that a person unjustly attacked should be compensated for what he has suffered in mind by the attack. To limit his suffering to mercenary

loss is an excess of materialism which results from the law's over-cautious dread of the abstract.

Juries, who invariably play a part in defamation cases, are under no misapprehension in this matter. They are accustomed to award damages according to the actual loss of esteem which the plaintiff has suffered, and in the jury-room they must often make merry over the Judge's distinctions between cups of tea and pain of mind. Normally, this will mean that damages are in fact awarded *ex dignitate*. The higher the plaintiff's position in society, the more likely he is to suffer from scandal, and the higher his damages will be—especially if the action be against a newspaper. If, on the other hand, the plaintiff's position in society is humble and obscure, the esteem of society is *pro tanto* a less important matter, and the difference will reflect itself in the amount of damages. This, no doubt, is a heresy against the principle of equality before the law; but if any reader doubt it, let him publish simultaneously a libel on the Prime Minister and on the village grocer, and see how he fares. Of course it is not invariably so; a jury is sometimes aware that it may be just as serious a thing for plain John Styles to be an outcast from the society of Clapham, as for the Rt. Hon. John Styles to be blown upon by one of those breaths of scandal which drawing-rooms and smoking-rooms alike are always preparing for him. But, on the average, the difference in social importance and prestige will roughly correspond to the difference in the actual injury done. Styles is a self-respecting Englishman, and it is a grievous thing to deprive him of the esteem of his neighbours and of himself. At one time, when he wore a sword or carried a quarter-staff, he vindicated his own honour by the ancient method of self-help; to-day all the forces of the law are constantly engaged, often indeed too busily engaged, in maintaining his good name and his self-respect. He is law-abiding, but distinctly touchy. In Shakespeare, his name is Private John Bates.

Much as it dislikes the abstract notion of 'pain of mind,' the law has not been able to exclude it in at least one form of civil injury. Damages awarded to a parent for the seduction of a daughter are frankly given for 'injured feelings' or 'family reputation,'—it makes no matter which, for they are the same thing. Even here, however, we grudgingly admit the real nature of the damage under the transparent fiction that compensation is given only for loss of the daughter's services in the house.

Pain of mind is also explicitly recognised in regard to Jane

Styles, a person of whom it is hard to find a definite conception in the law. It seems clear that in some cases feelings and sensibilities are acknowledged to be more vulnerable in the average woman than in the average man. This is true at least in actions for breach of promise of marriage, apart altogether from the mercenary legal view that a woman by breach of the promise has suffered an injury to her 'prospects of marriage'; and it is a settled rule that a superior court will not review the damages given by a jury in these cases, however excessive and vindictive they may be. Again, it has been held in two recent cases that false though not defamatory words and empty threats (for both of which an action does not usually lie), when used to a woman with damaging results, are actionable. In the first case, a foolish practical joker falsely told the plaintiff that her husband had met with an accident and had both his legs broken. The plaintiff 'became seriously ill from a shock to her nervous system.' In the second case, the plaintiff was a French maid-servant affianced to a German who, in 1915, was interned, and with whom she corresponded. The defendant, in order to induce her to produce certain letters, told her that she had been corresponding with a German spy, which was untrue. As a result, 'she sustained a severe shock and became incapacitated from following her employment, and suffered from neurasthenia, shingles, and other ailments'; and recovered damages. It may well be doubted whether, if John Styles had been the plaintiff, and had been falsely told that his wife had met with an accident, the law would have considered it a natural and probable result that he should take to his bed; or that under similar threats, he, with his well-known firmness and courage, should suffer from neurasthenia, shingles, and other ailments. Even in the case of the female plaintiffs, apparently nothing less than actual physical illness would have been enough to support their claims; yet who shall say how far mental pain and anxiety are the cause or the effect of many kinds of physical illness? ¹

A reasonable degree of stolidity is also expected of Styles in his acceptance of the material surroundings in which he lives. He must not be hypersensitive about the ordinary noises and smells

¹ The Infanticide Act, 1922, contemplates the state of mind of a woman after childbirth, and provides that where she 'by any wilful act of omission causes the death of her newly-born child but at the time of the act or omission she had not fully recovered from the effect of giving birth to such child, and by reason thereof the balance of her mind was then disturbed,' she shall be guilty of the special felony of infanticide, which is to be considered manslaughter and not murder.

and inconveniences which are inseparable from ordinary dwelling-houses in ordinary localities; for an over-delicate temperament receives little sympathy from the law. 'A nervous or anxious or prepossessed listener,' said Lord Selborne, 'hears sounds which would otherwise have passed unnoticed, and magnifies and exaggerates into some new significance, originating within himself, sounds which at other times would have been passively heard and not regarded.' And again: 'Neighbours everywhere . . . ought not to be extreme or unreasonable either in the exercise of their own rights or in the restriction of the rights of others.' The standard of comfort and convenience which Styles is entitled to expect is not easy to define, but something like a definition is attempted in a classic dictum of Vice-Chancellor Knight Bruce: 'Ought this inconvenience to be considered in fact as more than fanciful, more than one of mere delicacy or fastidiousness, as an inconvenience materially interfering with the ordinary comfort physically of human existence, not merely according to elegant or dainty modes and habits of living, but according to plain and sober and simple notions among English people?' And, we might add, these plain and sober and simple notions must be such as prevail in Clapham. There Styles must not expect, and he certainly will not get, an Arcadian serenity. All that he may reasonably demand is that nobody shall out-Clapham Clapham in noise, smell, dirt, darkness, and the other amenities of suburban life. Within these limits—and they are considerable—his home is his castle: but a castle plain and simple and sober, not one of luxury. His house, for example, is still in 'good tenantable repair,' even though the wall-paper be faded and the paint discoloured and the ceiling in need of whitewash.

Such is *l'homme moyen et sensuel* of English Law in one aspect of his composition. It is not as easy as it looks to arrive at a conception of him simply by the light of nature; all the reason, observation and experience of the law has been brought to bear for centuries in constructing him according to what seems the truest English pattern. The study of his characteristics is infinite, especially in that aspect of him with which lawyers are most concerned—his 'sweet reasonableness.' But that is another story.

CARLETON KEMP ALLEN.

WILFUL WASTE ON POOR RELIEF.

(WHERE THE POOR FARE BETTER THAN HERE AND
COST LESS.)

THERE was a time when England was regarded throughout Europe as the model country in what concerns the treatment of the poor. Sixty years ago, other countries, when bent on reforming their poor relief systems, always sent their officials to London to learn how the work could best be done ; just as they send them here now when bent on reforming their police. For our poor relief system was then, and for many a long year after, held to be the very best system the wit of man could devise, the only system, indeed, that could secure fair treatment alike for the poor and for those who support them.

Things have changed since then, however : foreign Poor Law officials are now more prone to go elsewhere than to come to England, when in search of advice to help them in the solving of their problems. For, according to them, not only have we stood still in poor relief matters, while other nations have gone ahead, but we have waxed quite wantonly extravagant. There is nothing to be learnt here now, they say, nothing to be seen that could serve them as a model, bound as they are to turn what money they have to good account. They cannot afford to play the spendthrift as we do. Such of them as come here now, go away wondering more often than not, wondering at the amount of money England spends on her poor, wondering still more at the heedless fashion in which she spends it, and at the meagre return she obtains for what she spends.

There are now, as every expert in such matters knows, capitals in which the poor are treated more humanely than in London, more generously ; in which they fare better all round in fact. Yet, in no other capital do the poor cost so much per head as in London. There are capitals, too, where the poor are dealt with not only more humanely and more economically than in London, but also much more wisely ; as they who hold rule there are alive to the fact that prevention is better than cure. They realise that it is more profitable for the whole community, rich and poor alike, to spend money on helping even the destitute not to become paupers,

than on supporting them when paupers they are. And they frame their relief methods accordingly.

In Copenhagen and Christiania, for instance, infinite trouble is taken to insure that no respectable man—or woman—stricken by misfortune, shall ever, through lack of a helping hand, just drift into pauperism and become a burden on his fellows. In those cities a regular war is waged to prevent the pauperisation of adults ; just as, in normal times, a crusade is carried on in Berlin to prevent the pauperisation of children ; and in Vienna, to guard against the transforming of respectable working men into loafers. Meanwhile, in London, paupers are practically manufactured, at the expense of the ratepayers too ; for the decent folk who go into the work-house are, as a rule, speedily demoralised—turned into paupers, in fact. And as things are, go there many decent folk must, unless indeed they are willing to starve.

Now a poor relief system under which pauperism is fostered, as it is under our system, is both wasteful and cruel, and ought therefore to be either mended or ended, without loss of time. And just as in former days other nations used to learn from us how to do their bettering or ending, now we might, if we but would, learn from them. For within comparatively recent years, several nations have not only adopted new methods of dealing with their poor, but have devised new relief systems ; while we still cling to the system we devised some ninety years ago, and content ourselves with lavishing on the working of it more and more money every year. Several of the new relief systems are better—two of them infinitely better—than our old system. Hardly one of them, indeed, but is better in some respects than ours, while in one respect, *i.e.* the administration of the Poor Law, they are practically all better than ours. In no other country that I know, and I know more or less all the countries in Europe that have poor relief systems, does so little of the money spent on poor relief actually go to the poor, as in England ; in no other country does so much of it either go to the officials who watch over them, or is just frittered away, no one quite knowing how.

‘What does become of all the money ?’ the head of an important foreign Poor Law department exclaimed in amazement, when told what the administration of poor relief cost in London. ‘Where can it all go ? It is lucky, indeed, that you English are wealthy,’ he added after a moment’s meditation.

Even if we were wealthy, much more wealthy than we are,

that would be no reason, surely, why we should waste our money. And that we do waste much of the money we spend on poor relief there is proof. For did we obtain for it even a fairly good return, either the poor would cost much less than they do, or they would fare much better, better, indeed, than the poor of any other country. It is because the money spent on them is not turned to good account that so many of them fare badly ; it is, in fact, because the Poor Law is administered unskilfully, in an amateurish fashion, and therefore wastefully. And even a bad Poor Law well administered yields better results, all the world over, than a good law badly administered. It would be well, therefore, surely, as time is precious and Parliament has much other work on its hands, were we to try to reform our Poor Law administration without waiting to tackle the law itself, especially as it is in Poor Law administration that we could, if we would, learn most from other nations. For it is precisely in what relates to administration that other countries are most in advance of England.

The most glaring defect in our Poor Law administration is its lack of uniformity. Whereas in Berlin, as in Copenhagen and other foreign capitals, the Poor Law is administered on exactly the same lines in all parts of the city, and the poor all fare alike ; in London it is administered on lines that vary from district to district, and the poor fare quite differently in different districts. In one street relief is dealt out to them on a quite lavish scale, while in the very next street it may be dealt out on a scale that spells semi-starvation. In one workhouse the inmates live in comfort and are well cared for ; in another, only a stone's throw away perhaps, they live in misery, under worse conditions than in a prison. For each Board of Guardians is practically free to treat the poor in its own district just as the fancy seizes it ; to treat the ratepayers so too, as it decides for itself what rate it levies on them. It may pamper the poor, and, to obtain money to lavish on them, may spoil the ratepayers ; or it may play the skinflint and make life a burden to the poor, while troubling ratepayers' consciences. The result is, in the favoured districts the poor are, of course, demoralised, to the detriment of themselves as well as the ratepayers ; while in the luckless districts, the poor, knowing that they are being unjustly treated, wax resentful, to the detriment of the whole community.

Now the lack of uniformity, which is so marked a feature of our Poor Law administration, and which differentiates it from

foreign systems, is due primarily to the fact that they who administer the Poor Law are its authorities, as well as its administrators. Boards of Guardians, and it is they who, with the help of their paid officials, administer the law, have practically no higher authority; as the Minister of Health, who is in theory their higher authority, has in practice no control over them. He cannot force them to administer the Poor Law all on the same lines, as each Board is free to decide for itself the lines on which to administer it, and to change those lines at will. He can, through his inspectors, give them advice, warnings, and orders; but they may, if they choose, set even his orders at nought and go their own way. The only thing he can do, and more often than not he fails when he tries to do even that, is to prevent their spending money unlawfully.

In the chief towns of other countries things are managed very differently. The Poor Law administrators, whether paid or honorary, are under the direction and control of Poor Law authorities, who tell them what to do and see that they do it. Those authorities, who are as a rule paid officials, are themselves under the direction and control of the Poor Law higher authority, who is always a paid official, a trained expert, too, in all that concerns the poor. In Copenhagen and Christiania, the higher authority cannot be dismissed without the consent of the Crown; and in most capitals he is practically a permanent official. Although responsible for what he does to the State, on the one hand, and the Municipality on the other, political changes leave his position untouched; unless convicted of crime, he holds office as long as he can do his work properly. He is thus able to secure for the poor of the whole city not only equality of treatment, but continuity, as all power is in his hands. He decides the lines on which the Poor Law shall be administered, the form in which the relief shall be given, and he deals out to his subordinates the money supplied to him wherewith to pay for it.

I never yet met a foreign Poor Law higher authority who would not have stood aghast at the mere thought of those whom it is his duty to control being allowed, as our Poor Law Guardians are, to raise for themselves the money they require. Yet the power to levy a Poor Rate would, undoubtedly, be much less dangerous, so far as the wasting of money goes, in the hands of foreign Poor Law administrators than it actually is in the hands of our guardians. For not only are foreign Poor Law administrators under close

surveillance and control ; but, whether paid or honorary, they are, as a rule, specially chosen to act as administrators because of their fitness for the work.

Our Poor Law Guardians, we must not forget, are all honorary officials, amateurs in fact. Even the chairman of a Board may know no more about business methods than the man-in-the-street. Nay, he may himself be the man-in-the-street, just as he may be a duke, a St. Vincent de Paul, or the veriest Scrooge. For no tests of any sort are imposed on candidates for Boards of Guardians, no precautions are taken to insure their being suitable persons for the office. So far as the law is concerned, they may be tinkers by calling, Bolsheviks by creed, unskilled labourers who can hardly read or write, or small tradesmen who have never in the course of their lives had the handling of more than a few pounds at a time. Thus in many districts it is a mere matter of chance whether they are, or are not, fitted for the work they are elected to do ; and the chances that they are not are many to one. For the work is difficult, as well as troublesome ; and many of those best fitted to do it refuse ; and not a few of them refuse through the fear lest any good they might do should be undone by their unfit fellow guardians.

There are, of course, Boards of Guardians that do their work admirably ; but there are many more that do it only fairly well ; and still more that do it badly, do it badly as a rule, because they have never been taught how to do it well. There are Boards of which no single member had, until he became a guardian, any experience as an administrator, any experience in dealing with large sums of money. To expect such Boards, or even the average Board, to administer the Poor Law as it must be administered, if fair treatment is to be secured both for the poor and the ratepayers ; or to direct workhouses, etc., in such a way as to secure even a decent return for the money they spend on them, is to expect a miracle ; and in vain, of course. With the best will in the world, they cannot do what they are called upon to do : a considerable amount of the money they spend must, therefore, inevitably be wasted. So far as poor relief is concerned, amateur administrators always spell more or less woeful waste ; especially when they are given a free hand, as our guardians are, to levy a poor rate and do what they will with the money it yields.

Copenhagen is the only foreign capital in which our poor relief administration was ever given a trial ; and that trial ended in disaster. The Danish Poor Law was at one time precisely the

same as ours still is ; and it was administered on the same lines by uncontrolled amateurs. Already thirty-five years ago, however, the Danes woke up to the fact that, although the cost of poor relief was waxing higher and higher year by year, their poor were faring worse and worse. They, therefore, being kindly as well as thrifty, made a clean sweep of their amateur administrators and installed paid officials in their place. And in so doing they were wise in their generation. Of that there is proof ; for, in the three years that followed their clean sweep, the cost of poor relief in Copenhagen went down considerably, although the deserving poor were treated more generously than ever before. Again and again I was told, when in Denmark, that amateur administrators might do for wealthy London, but they were much too expensive a luxury for Copenhagen.

Since 1891 the administration of poor relief in Copenhagen has been entirely in the hands of paid officials ; and, so far as I can judge, the result is a cause of satisfaction alike to economists and to humanitarians. I know no other capital where so good a return is obtained for the money spent on the poor, no other capital where the deserving poor are so well cared for, or where the worthless are dealt with more wisely. Still, as there is no chance of a purely bureaucratic relief system ever being installed in London, the system in force in Berlin is, to us as a nation, of more practical interest than that in force in Copenhagen.

The late Sir Robert Morier, who lived for years in Germany, used to maintain that, if London wished to improve its poor relief system, the best thing it could do was to remodel it on that in force in Berlin—pre-war Berlin, of course. According to him, and he had the right to speak on the subject with authority, that is the system from which we have most to learn. For, under it, 'not only has the average citizen assigned to him, when called upon to act as honorary Poor Law official, the very duties he is best qualified to fulfil ; but citizens of all degrees—the millionaire and the mechanic—are yoked together in the same work and do it on the same terms.'

The Berlin system has certainly one great merit : under it an unfailing supply of efficient Poor Commissioners, *i.e.* honorary Poor Law officials, is secured ; and they are given work to do that they can do well, while they are required to do it under conditions that ensure, so far as possible, its being done economically. These Commissioners are not elected, but appointed, and without any

regard whatever to their own wishes. The city is divided into 326 districts, and in each district a list is kept of the ratepayers who are considered, by the town authorities, to be suitable persons to act as its honorary officials. And from that list the Municipal Councillors, who are the only honorary officials elected directly by the ratepayers, choose the Poor Commissioners. Rich and poor are on the lists, head-workers and hand-workers, great financiers, well-known advocates, and small tradesmen; Junkers and Socialists, too, for no questions are asked as to their politics. They must be good citizens—*i.e. respectable and law abiding*—that is all that is required of them. But it is only such among them as have capacity of one sort or another that are appointed honorary officials. And they who are appointed must act for three years at least. No matter how distasteful the work of a Poor Commissioner may be to the man—or woman—who is called upon to do it, or how inconvenient it may be to him to spare the time in which to do it, do it he must. He has no alternative, unless, indeed, he prefers to pay the penalty, and it is a fairly high one.

They who refuse, when called upon to act as the city's honorary officials, not only suffer socially, as they are looked upon as bad citizens, but they forfeit certain of their rights as citizens: they cannot hold any public office, or vote at any election, and they must pay higher rates than their fellows, higher by at least one-eighth, and at most one-fourth. For Berlin has a legal claim on the services of all its citizens: it has the right to summon them to render it service, to work for it, in fact, and gratis; the right, too, to pick and choose among them as to who shall, and who shall not, be summoned, so as to secure those best able to serve it efficiently. And there is—or was before the war—a strong feeling in the city that it is well that it should be thus; well that they who live there should have the fact brought home to them that they owe a duty to those among whom they live, and that, if they shirk it, they will be punished.

In Berlin each district has its own Poor Commissioners' Committee, and its own paid officials; just as in London each district has its own Board of Guardians and paid officials. But, curiously enough, in Berlin honorary officials do the work done in London by paid officials, while paid officials do that done here by honorary. Here the Guardians direct and control the administration of relief: they decide what shall be done for the poor and do it in a measure, although the actual work of relieving the destitute, and investigating

the causes of their destitution is done by their paid officials. The Guardians are the masters in fact : they tell the paid officials what to do, see that they do it, and give them the money wherewith to do it. In Berlin, on the contrary, it is the paid officials who direct and control the administration of relief, while the Poor Commissioners do the administering ; they do, in fact, what is done here by the relieving officers, so far as out-relief is concerned. They have nothing to do with the indoor poor, nor yet with the vagrant poor. In Berlin vagrants, as all their kith and kin, are dealt with by the police.

Every Commissioner is expected to be in close touch with certain poor families in his district, to know them personally, their means too, and to report to the Chairman of his Committee if they need help, or to the medical authorities if they are ill. The Chairman is appointed by the Poor Law authorities from among the Commissioners, unless one of them is willing to undertake the office voluntarily ; and it is on the Chairman that the chief work of the Committee falls. He deals out the food, clothing, and money that are needed, the Poor Law authorities providing him with the necessary means. On the first of every month they send him a sum of money, the minimum, as they calculate, that he can require ; and at the end of the month he must render to them an exact account of what he has done with it. Then the extra money he has spent is given to him, provided he has spent what he has had with due regard to economy.

In theory the responsibility for the relief of the poor, as for all the other work of the town, rests on the Municipal Council, as the representative of the ratepayers. In practice, however, the Council has nothing to do with the work, since it delegates its duties as an executive body, together with its authority as a controlling body, to its executive committee, the *Magistrat*. It contents itself, in fact, with appointing the members of the *Magistrat* to do its work, providing them with the money to do it, providing them also with honorary officials to help them to do it, and watching that they do it economically. The Council's rôle is, in fact, to safeguard the interests of the ratepayers, while the *Magistrat* carries on the business of the town.

The *Magistrat* consists of thirty-four members, *Stadträte*, each one of whom is an expert in some branch of municipal work, and is attached to the department concerned with that branch. Seventeen of them are paid officials, and it is they who do the actual work

of the department ; while the other seventeen, who are honorary, act as their helpers and advisers. Every department is under the control of one paid *Stadtrat*, who is practically its managing director, his colleagues being ordinary directors. He is personally responsible for the work it does to the chairman of the *Magistrat*, the chief Burgomaster, a paid official, who in his turn is personally responsible for the work of all the departments to the Municipal Council representing the ratepayers, and to the City President representing the State.

The Berlin Poor Law department is known as the Poor Board. It consists of three paid *Stadträte*, one of whom is its Chairman, six unpaid *Stadträte*, a number of paid officials, eighteen Municipal Councillors, and ten *Bürgers' Deputies*. The Councillors and Deputies take no part in the business of the Board ; they merely attend its monthly meetings to receive reports as to what it is doing. The *Stadträte* are the Poor Law authorities for the whole city ; and all the Poor Law administrators throughout the city, whether paid or honorary, are directly under their control. They can dismiss any Poor Commissioner who acts contrary to their directions ; they can dissolve any Poor Committee that does not work on the lines they lay down, and they can install a committee of paid officials in its place. As the paid *Stadträte* are appointed for twelve years, and generally hold office for much longer, they can of course secure continuity in the administration of the relief ; and as all the money spent on it passes through their hands, they can also secure equality of treatment for the poor. Equality of treatment for the ratepayers is secured under the Berlin system, as the burden entailed by the poor rests on the city as a whole.

While directing and controlling the administration of out-relief, the Poor Board administers indoor relief, and also the relief of children, excepting those relieved together with their parents. All the Poor Law institutions belonging to the city are worked by the Board, a fact that makes for economy not only by preventing overlapping, but by enabling the supplies for them to be bought in huge quantities, and therefore at wholesale prices. And what makes still more for economy, they who work them, being trained experts, can of course turn the money they spend to much better account than amateurs could. Nor is that all. As the Board has institutions of diverse kinds under its direction, it can place each one of its charges in the very institution where it is best for him—or her—to be. Thus there is no fear, in Berlin, of epileptics being

housed together with the feeble-minded ; nor yet of the old with the young.

Although the Poor Board administers the relief of children, it does so through a separate department, which is housed quite apart from the Board and has its own officials who have nothing to do with poor relief. For, in normal times, Berlin never allows its protégés to be brought in contact with anyone connected in any way with pauperism ; never allows them to cross the threshold of any institution in which there is a pauper. When Poor Commissioners are appointed to watch over the adult poor, honorary officials are appointed to watch over the young. Every State child has two honorary guardians to take care of him—or her—personally ; and a third, to take care of his interests ; while the Director of the Children's Board is the guardian of all the children in the town, and is responsible for each one of them to the Poor Board. If proof is given to the Director that a child, no matter whether rich or poor, is being neglected or ill-treated, he must at once take possession of him, and see that those responsible for him are punished. Deserted children are all handed over to him when found ; so are waifs and strays, and all the other luckless little mites that haunt the mean streets of great cities. For he is the Orphans' Father, that is his official title ; and his home is their home, until he finds for them another. And in Berlin every child who is uncared for ranks as an orphan, and is under his surveillance until twenty-one.

His charges, if normal, are boarded out ; and such of them as are girls remain boarded out until they are sixteen, going to school the while. During the last two years they are at school, the girls are carefully trained in housewifery ; and the boys, in some skilled handicraft, unless, indeed, they show signs of special ability. And an inspector goes about among them in search of such signs, and sees to it that any talents they have are fostered. For Berlin insists that its state children shall be given the chance of developing to the full whatever good gifts they may have.

The Berlin relief system has its defects of course ; one very serious defect, indeed. For under it the chairmen of the Poor Committees are given more to do than some of them can do, with the result that the aged deserving poor suffer sometimes, while the feckless flourish. None the less, so far as I can judge, the merits of the system far outweigh its defects ; and were we to take what is good in it, leaving what is bad, we might certainly frame for

ourselves a relief system under which we should obtain a much better return than we do for the money we spend on the poor; while many of the poor would fare much better than now. For, in spite of its defects, the Berlin system is an economical system. When I was last in Berlin—that was before the war—the cost of poor relief per head of the population was less by 6s. 10¹/₂d. there than it was even then in London. It is also a system under which wise and kindly treatment is secured for the young. In no other city that I know are the children of the State, in normal times, so well cared for as in Berlin; in no other city do they start life with so good a chance of making their way in the world, having their full share of the world's pleasures the while.

EDITH SELLERS.

THE DIAMOND.

BY E. L. GRANT WATSON.

THE *Mary Rogers* was the first boat out of St. Michaels to go south after the long period of the northern winter. The port was free at last from the ice, and the small steamer beat her way southward. Mrs. Cochran was the only woman on board that trip. Sometimes an Eskimo would go south with his wife as far as Sitka, but European women were not often to be found travelling in those far northern latitudes. She was a young woman of not more than thirty, accustomed to travel alone or to go long journeys at the behest of her husband, as on this occasion. She now stood upon the upper deck, her fur coat wrapped close about her, and her dark eyes looking out keenly from under her heavy fur cap.

To the south and west there was the grey expanse of the sea, with cold, grey waves monotonously following one another. To the north there was a track of white foam left behind them, and to the eastward the long brown edge of the *Malaspina glacier*. Both the cold sea and that long ridge of rotten ice presented a drear and melancholy aspect, but on the lower deck under her feet there was life and interest, the constant movement of men and animals. Some twenty or thirty rough-haired ponies were tethered on the starboard side. They were constantly moving, tossing their heads or whinnying, looking out with frightened eyes across the sea. The strong odour of their bodies, which seemed to fill all the adjacent air, had mingled since the start of the voyage with the other rank effluvia of a northern coaster, and had transmitted to the food its pervading flavour. Beyond the ponies and further forward were two dog teams; these kept up a continuous bickering amongst themselves, snarling and growling. A young Eskimo flicked them from time to time with the long lash of his whip. From the galley was wafted the strong savour of food together with the rank stench of burnt blubber.

Mrs. Cochran was well pleased with her surroundings. An English woman of taste and refinement, she had a passion for travelling. She liked now to look down upon the foreign and peculiar quality of this boat. There were Eskimos, Indians and Americans, rough men whom she admired for the hardihood

and endurance of their lives. She had not traversed the Yukon and spent a long, dark winter in Dawson City without appreciating the valour of human courage which, in that remote land, lives side by side with every degradation of the human brute. She was interested in her fellow human beings. To her imaginative perception the discovery of each new type was an enlargement of her own personality, an enlargement of perception and emotion.

She had been watching for some time a tall, gaunt man, the only other passenger, on that bleak morning, upon the upper deck, and who, for the last hour, and for longer for all she knew, had been leaning over the rail at some twenty paces distant and gazing over the sea. This man had, from the first, attracted her attention. His silence, his cold, remote dignity, his drawn, thin face, his grey eyes, which were so pale in colour, and then the pervading quality of the man, which though almost unhuman and withdrawn was in no way hard, but soft rather, with a softness not of yielding nor submission, but with that mildness which is the accomplished acceptance of fate ; all these appealed to her as the attributes of some rare and profound experience.

She had watched him. In the saloon, at meal times, she had seen his embarrassment with handling of knife and fork¹; it was obvious that he was unaccustomed to the using of these implements. On the one or two occasions that she had addressed him, he had answered in the voice of an educated man. He had been reticent, and she had been left wondering if possibly there could be any vestige of truth in the gossip which, with a careless laugh, had been thrown from mouth to mouth, that in the far north, in the darkness of winter, he had killed and eaten three of his companions. She did not credit that loose talk, yet she was intrigued. How was it that the man could remain so patiently, hour after hour, leaning against the rail and gazing with that steady and intent stare over the sea ?

She walked over to where he was standing.

' Mr. Hales.'

He turned slowly, and withdrawing, as if regretfully, his glance from the distance, regarded her with those grey eyes whose look was indefinably cold and tender. She was surprised to see now that he was younger than she had thought. He was certainly not more than forty, and perhaps only thirty-five. This was the face of a young man, but because of its thinness and the deepness of its lines it was different from the faces of other men that she had

met. She was not daunted by his silence nor the directness of his look. She had come prepared for words, and words she would have now at any cost. The man must after all be human and would answer to her own humanity. 'Since we are the only two on deck,' she said, 'it seems natural that we should speak to one another.'

'It's very kind of you,' he said slowly, and then, with the simple naivety of a child, he added: 'I have been wanting to speak, but I am shy. You are the first woman that I have seen for nearly five years. I have seen very few men, even, during that time.'

'Indeed, have you been so far away in the wilds?'

His gaze had strayed beyond her and was again fixed upon the sea. He frowned slightly. 'I've noticed you, and I've seen that you have been watching me. . . . I find it difficult to speak to anyone, I have got unaccustomed to words.' He looked at her now for a moment. 'You've watched me in the saloon, and have seen that I'm not very clever with my knife and fork; and I have watched your hands.'

'My hands?'

'Yes, the rings. You have some diamonds.'

She looked at him surprised, hesitated, and then took off her glove. 'This thing, you mean?'

His face suddenly became alive with light and pleasure. 'They are so beautiful, there is nothing surely more beautiful in the world than a diamond.'

Mrs. Cochran was regarding him with a questioning wonder. He was like a child, pleased at the sight of some toy; and that quality of childishness did not fail to find a response. She took off her ring and handed it to him.

He held it up to the light. 'So pure, so pure,' he said. 'Oh, marvellous!' He smiled at her and gave a sudden short laugh. He handed the ring back. 'You must put on your glove now, or your hand will get cold,' he said, 'but let me see it again some other time.'

'Yes, I will, certainly, if you like.' She laughed, and feeling that she could speak to the naivety of the child more readily than she could have spoken to the restraint and reticence of the man, she said: 'Tell me about yourself. Where have you been? What have you been doing?'

'I've been on the ice.' The sentence stood simple yet ambiguous.

'On the ice?' she repeated.

'Yes.' His smile flickered over the deep lines about his mouth, and he turned more fully towards her. 'I'd like to tell you. I'd like to tell you about it all from the start, if you could bear to hear, if it would not weary you.'

'Do tell me. I want to hear.' And then, smiling, she asked, 'Is it anything about diamonds?'

He looked away, and disregarding this last question, said simply, 'It's good of you. I have wanted to tell somebody. It will help me to get back . . . to people, help me to take hold again. You don't know how wonderful it is,' he added seriously, 'for me to be standing here talking to a woman, to the sort of woman I used to meet and talk to; it's just too wonderful for me to realise altogether.'

She still regarded him wonderingly and amused. For a moment she encountered those pale, cold eyes, and now she saw that there was fire and life, an enduring spark of vitality behind the coldness of their grey. This man was attractive by his very remoteness and by that flash of animation which she had perceived. His eyes, in their profound and still attention, were similar to the grey spirit of that northern land, which at first had seemed to her of a neutral quality, but which strangely had revealed, in darkness and in the splendour of northern lights, its polar vitality. As they dwelt for a moment upon her, and then went by again to rest upon the distant horizon, she registered her perception of that quality. They revealed, not so much the soul of a man, but the crystalline reality of the arctic, and the fire within the crystal. Those eyes had rested upon the diamond in her ring. It now seemed natural that he should have noticed that stone. They had become, for a moment, when she had handed it to him, wistful with the wistfulness of a child; again they rested upon the waves, cold and remote.

The story that he told was spoken in a low and even voice. Sometimes he paused in the narration as if exploring again the back-thoughts of the past. Silences would intervene, which she did not break; like her companion she let her glance rest upon the grey, ever-moving waves.

'Five years ago this spring I was with a small party of prospectors. I was a mining engineer by profession, and in the employ of a company that owns much property in Alaska. I was in charge of that party, and we were exploring territory north

and east of the Behring Strait. We expected to be back on the Yukon by the winter. Of necessity we often had to make long expeditions from our base. On these expeditions we were dependent for fresh meat on the food that we shot or speared. Often we would go down to the sea-ice and spear seals at their breathing-holes. . . .

'There were eight of us at that time, I remember, and we had scattered over a large area. It was spring time, as I have said, but unexpectedly early for the ice to begin breaking up. Without any warning a huge piece of ice, sheared and cut away by some unsuspected current, broke from the main sheet. Six of us were upon that piece of floating ice. The two other men of our party were upon the shore. I don't know if they ever got back to their base. I never heard. I was one of the six men upon the floating ice. The thing happened quickly. There was the characteristic splitting and wrenching sound, then, almost before we realised what had happened, we were drifting out to sea. The current was setting strong from the coast, and when we reached the fractured edge, the stretch of water was too wide to venture an attempt at swimming back to the land ice.

'We didn't guess then what was in store for us. No doubt each one of us was a little afraid; we had heard stories of the same thing happening before, and we knew the dangers, but we didn't for a long time realise what that accident implied. No, I don't think any one of us guessed at the slow cruelties of chance. We assured each other—I remember how warmly we assured each other—that the current which was now carrying us away would be sure to meet some other current which would, in a little while, drift us back to the shore. . . .

'There was a ridge of pack-ice which ran across our floating island. We huddled together under that for shelter for the night. We excavated a cave in it later, but that first evening we didn't bother to do anything so elaborate, we didn't then see the need. The next morning we were out of sight of land. There was nothing but sea and floating ice around us. It was a huge piece we were on, and so long as the weather kept good there was no immediate danger. . . . I think every one of us was frightened at the look of that desolate sea, though we didn't speak our fears; we assured each other that the ice we were on was large and thick and safe. . . . We took stock of our resources: We had good warm clothes, we had two guns and about a hundred cartridges, three harpoons

and six knives and a box or two of matches, and, what proved to be most important, we had between us about a dozen fish-hooks and some line. . . .

'We drifted sometimes one way, sometimes another, day after day; sometimes we could see land in the distance, and sometimes we were alone upon a sea of floating ice. We had no means of taking bearings and only the vaguest idea where we were, for it was difficult to estimate the force or the direction of the currents. It was summer and there were plenty of seals and we were not hard up for food. We kept our cartridges in reserve and only used our harpoons. Our fish-hooks were very useful, and we learned to make others from the bones of the fishes that we caught, and to make line from the twisted gut. We excavated a hole in the central ridge of our island, and in this we lived. We made a lamp from a wick of cloth floating in a skin bag of seal-oil. It was the duty of one of us to see that this was always burning. We wanted to save our matches, and already feared the winter and the long winter darkness.

'That first summer was our initiation; we began to discover what life in the arctic was like. We thought we knew, but we didn't know till then. . . . 'He broke off and was silent for a while. 'You have lived through a northern winter?' he asked.

'Yes.'

'Then you'll know that during that long darkness a man feeds, as it were, upon his own inner warmth, his own power. It is as if something from deep in human nature has been dragged up to the surface. Men are a little afraid of themselves. The first light of the sun has an amazing effect. All one's being seems to rush to one's throat and head. It is exciting; no one can resist it. The days lengthen, the nights vanish, and the midnight sun looks faintly down. The continuous light produces at first a wakeful restlessness. We were terribly restless on our island of ice. Later we learned to shift our consciousness further back, to hide ourselves from those cold rays. We came to hate that continuous light, and when the nights came again we were glad. We learnt during that first summer to hide ourselves from ourselves, and from one another.

'We drifted first southward, then out to sea, then northwards again as far as we could tell. We were anxious for a time about our island, which had grown considerably less, but what we felt and resented most of all was our utter impotence. We were at

the mercy of chance, and we were made to feel that nature had no regard for our hope or our despair.'

Hales paused for a long while; at length, as though his thoughts after a long journey had returned again to the place where last they had found utterance in words, he continued in the same even and unimpassioned voice. 'It was our minds, during that first summer, and not our bodies that suffered. Then came the winter, and with it hope and fear. We were frozen in again, and our island was become a part of the sheet of ice which seemed to stretch endlessly, endlessly around us. During the summer we had made preparations; we had seal-skin overalls, and carried with us long strips of dried meat. We left our grotto in the ice, and abandoned the lamp which we had kept burning for so long.

'At that time we were filled with hope and courage. Anything was better than drifting at the mercy of wind and current. We knew roughly where the land must be, and could tell our compass from the stars. We travelled as fast as we could, living on the meat that we had with us, and on the fifth day we came to land. It was a desolate coast of rocks, but still land, firm and immovable. . . . The winter came quickly with a series of fierce northerly blizzards. We could not travel in that wild weather, so we made a snow hut Eskimo-fashion, and in this we lived for seven long, weary months. We used a lot of cartridges that first winter; we killed twenty-seven polar bears and ate the greater part of them, and a large number of seals and foxes. It was amazing the amount of meat that we ate, and yet we were always hungry.

'I can give you no idea of the slow passage of time, but a man changes as time passes, and when the conditions are so different from anything that he has before experienced, then he becomes different too. This calamity had come so suddenly upon us that our morale was shaken. We were unprepared, and so went down before the stress of fortune. We were like sad animals, living an inner, instinctive life; we relapsed back into the past, and yet we were aware, some of us at least were aware, of what we were forgetting. . . .

'I can't tell it you. I can't tell it you all, it would take too long; but the next summer we wasted. We had to follow the coast-line, for there only could we find food. It took us all that summer to find out that we were on an island. It was laborious work, and we covered many hundred miles in our wanderings. We

camped again and spent another winter. We were very near despair ; all were hungry, badly hungry, for the first time, for we kept our cartridges in reserve to use only if we were attacked by bears. That winter Jefferson, one of the younger of our party, died. We buried him in the snow and wondered who would be the next to follow.

'The next spring we got off that island, and made the mainland at last. It was a slow and laborious task following the coastline with all its inlets and headlands. We had changed so much by then, had become so much like animals living in the snow and ice, that I don't think we hoped for anything very definite ; we went on from habit, like automata. We rarely ever spoke to each other. . . . I dare say if the conditions had been less hard things would have been different, but as it was each one seemed withdrawn far away into himself. We existed, and to exist we ate ; we never cooked our food now, all our matches had got wet and hopelessly spoilt ; we ate our food raw, and I think that the taste of the warm blood was the only pleasure we had. The third winter was our worst. Johnson, who all that summer had been very fierce and sulky, went raving mad. We had a dreadful time with him, but I think it woke us out of our apathy. He finally ran out into the darkness and we never saw him again.

'It was Johnson's madness, more than anything else, that frightened me and woke me up from the coma into which I had fallen. I remembered that I had once been a man. I remember looking out over that drear landscape and feeling that in spite of everything I would come through. I began to hope again. . . . It was then that I began to make things.'

'To make things ?' Mrs. Cochran questioned. 'What kind of things ?'

'Things that my materials suggested. I'll show them to you some time. I made them out of the skins of birds and animals that I killed. I sewed them with a needle made of fish-bone and used dried fish-gut for thread. I found a satisfaction in doing the work as neatly as I could. It did me good and the things I made reminded me of the civilisation that one time I had known. I began to think again. . . . It may seem strange, but it was about that time that I began to think about precious stones, and in particular about diamonds. The precious stone is the finest and most beautiful thing that the culture of any time has been able to produce ; it's so much a thing in itself, you can't go behind

it. . . . In that long darkness of the winter I used to think about precious stones, and then it was one big diamond that I used to think about. A diamond had all those qualities which ice might have, but which it never possesses ; ice is always murky or flecked, it perishes and it breaks. A diamond is always clear and hard. To think of it used to give me pleasure and a kind of consolation. I made up my mind that, if ever I got back, I would buy the biggest diamond that my money could buy.'

The low, monotonous refrain in which he was speaking ceased, and as if reclaiming himself from a world of dream and fancy, he looked with a sudden shy glance at his companion. 'Perhaps this sounds to you just a little bit mad?' he asked.

'No, not madder than many other of the desires of men and women. The wonder is that you didn't go mad altogether.'

'It was that that saved me,' he said with conviction.

'Yes, I can understand.' And looking into his cold grey eyes, she could understand how that the abstract idea of a stone, hard and flawless, holding within the depths of its transparencies a light, so secret and elusive as to be akin to life itself, might offer, even in its image, a symbol to save a human soul from the abyss. 'And now that you are safe and back again, are you going to buy one?' she asked.

'Yes, that's what I want more than anything else.' As he spoke his eyes showed that bright and sudden glitter which she had before noticed. 'The company that I have worked for have treated me very well. As soon as they heard that I had turned up again, they cabled, together with their congratulations, my salary for the last five years. I have more than two thousand pounds. Do you think I could buy a good large diamond for two thousand pounds?'

'Would you spend it all?'

'Yes.'

'I should think you could get a good one for that price. But when you've got it, what will you do with it?'

'I shall look at it,' he said. 'I shall like to look at it. It will be the thing I have wanted, the thing that life has made me want. It's the light that came to me in that darkness; it gave me the impulse and the power to hope. Do you understand?'

She looked at him for some moments in silence, then she smiled. 'Tell me how you got through,' she said, 'and what happened to the other men.'

The intensity which had come into his manner and speech vanished abruptly. 'We all got through all right. We pulled ourselves together after Johnson went mad. Last autumn, before the bad weather came, we struck a trading station, and early this spring came overland to Norm. From there I came straight on to St. Michaels and was lucky in catching this boat.'

'And now?' she queried.

'I'm going back to look at civilisation. I shall buy the very best and purest thing it can give.'

'A diamond!'

'The finest I can get. It will make up, if you can understand, for those years; they have not been altogether wasted.'

'Don't you want anything else?' she asked. 'You are a young man; you will grow young again.'

'Other things may come, but I want that first.'

Mrs. Cochran laughed; she turned her eyes from the grey waves to the lower deck where men and animals jostled together in restless movement. 'After all,' she said, 'you can always give it to your wife.'

He shook his head and remained silent. His glance, which had strayed for a moment over the activities of the ship, rested again on the horizon.

Mrs. Cochran had been about to speak, but paused. Her philosophy of common sense, which had guided her through many of life's difficulties, was a little shaken. She wondered if indeed a stone, however pure and beautiful, however large and precious, could make up for the lost years, the lost desires and impulses. Perhaps he was right, and a diamond might be as good a recompense as life could offer.

AERIAL FLIGHT IN OLD ENGLISH ROMANCE.

It is a matter of common knowledge that the idea of aerial flight—doubtless derived from the swift and easy motion of birds in the air—pervades the mythologies and legends of the ancient world. In later times it became a definite aspiration of civilised man—an aspiration which gave rise to primitive attempts at winged flight (dating back in England to the eleventh-century exploit of Oliver of Malmesbury), and led to well-nigh interminable speculations and projects during the next seven or eight hundred years. The story of Oliver (or Elmer, as he is sometimes called) has a measure of historical warranty in the annals of the early chroniclers. Following the authority of these old writers, Milton revived the story in his 'History of Britain,' 1670, though with the apologetic excuse that he merely included the relation—otherwise, he held, too light for a serious history—on the ground of the 'strangeness thereof.' If there be doubt as to the truth of so strange and daring an exploit, there can be none as to its having proved a failure. The story runs that this would-be aeronaut, having fitted wings to his hands and feet, flew from the top of a tower for more than a furlong, when, 'the wind being too high, he came fluttering down, to the maiming of all his limbs.' Despite his 'crash,' Oliver—apparently endowed with a glimmer of that courageous optimism which characterised the modern pioneers of gliding and of flight—was not wholly discouraged. For he was, in the words of Milton, 'so conceited of his Art, that he attributed the cause of his fall to the want of a tail, as birds have'—surely the earliest known reflection on the place of a tail in the theory of stability.

It was a similar, albeit earlier and more disastrous flying episode, legendary in character and of prehistoric date, which afforded an incident for the oldest known attempt in English literature to treat flight in an imaginative or romantic vein. The legend in question is that concerned with the apocryphal story of Bladud, the tenth king of Britain and the reputed founder of Bath, though perchance more often remembered as the father of the equally mythical King Lear. It is said that Bladud made himself wings wherewith to fly—a venture designed to enhance his reputation in the eyes of the people as a magician and worker of wonders. The traditional tragedy which ensued is usually assigned a date about 850 B.C.,

and was related for the first time in the '*Historia Britonum*' of Geoffrey of Monmouth, written in or near the year A.D. 1147. Subsequently it was transcribed by the early English chroniclers, and appeared in an English version for the first time in the 1516 edition of Fabyan's '*Chronicle*.' We are there told with quaint brevity that Bladud, having taught the 'lore of Negromancy through his Realme, fynally toke it in suche pryde and presumption, that he toke upon hym to flie into y ayer. But he fyll upon the temple of his god Appolyn [in the city of Trinovantum, i.e. London] and theron was all to torne.'

Such is the flying story which inspired the elaborated poetical version printed, some fifty years later, in the 1574 edition of '*The Mirror for Magistrates*.' In this well-known work—a chronicle, partly in verse and partly in prose, wherein ill-fated rulers are made to relate, as a warning to others, their own unhappy doom—Bladud, having told of his journey to Athens, the learning he acquired there, and so forth, reflects, in language not less picturesque than it is aptly imaginative, on the fatal outcome of his vain and foolish aspirations to achieve fame by flying.

'Were not it strange, thinke you, a King to flie,
To Play the tombler, or some ingling cast ?
To dresse himselfe in plumes, as erst did I,
And vnder armes to knit on wings full fast ?
A sport you thinke that might the wise agast,
But Magicke arte had taught me points of skill
Which in the end did proue my future ill.

'I deekt my corpse with plumes (I say) and wings,
And had them set, thou seest, in skilfull wise
With many feats, fine poyseing equall things,
To aide myselfe in flight to fall or rise,
Few men did euer vse like enterprise
Gainst store of wind, by practise rise I could,
And turne and winde at last which way I would.

'But ere the perfect skill I learned had,
(And yet me thought I could do passing well)
My subjects hearts with pleasant toyes to glad,
From Temples top, where did Apollo dwell,
I sayd to flie, but on the Church I fell,
And in the fall I lost my life withal.
This was my race, this was my fatal fall.'

In the edition of 1587 Higgins—the author of this section of the ‘Mirror’—further points the moral of the story :

‘*L’Envoi.*

- ‘ Who so that takes in hand the aire to scale,
As Bladud here did take on hime to fle :
Or *Dedals sonne* (as Poets tell the tale)
Yong Icarus, that flew (they say) so hie :
Or else as *Simon Magus* flew perdy :
Though nere so well his plumes and winges hee decke
By sea h’ is dround, by land hee breakes his necke.
- ‘ On ground is surest place for men to goe,
But yet take heede and let your ground bee good :
The surest footing is perdy beloe ;
Who styes the aire I count his dealing wood,
The slender buildings hauty, feoble stoode,
On high the tempests haue much powre to wreche :
Then best to bide beneath, and surest for the necke.’

Alas ! who will be so bold, despite the wonderful achievements in aeronautics during quite recent times, wholly to deny the soundness of the poet’s advice as offered more than three hundred years ago : ‘ Then best to bide beneath, and surest for the necke ’ ?

A more ambitious attempt to treat flight as the subject of romance appeared anonymously in 1638, under the title of ‘ The Man in the Moone, or a Discourse of a Voyage thither, by Domingo Gonsales.’ Written some thirty odd years before the date of publication, by Francis Godwin, Bishop of Hereford, the book enjoyed a considerable vogue in its day, and went through several editions (including translations into French and Dutch) before the close of the seventeenth century. Subsequently it passed more or less into oblivion, but though of no special merit as literature, it may still be read with amusement. In a general way—according to the late Professor Walter Raleigh—this romantic story derived its inspiration from the ‘ Veracious History ’ of Lucian, and is one of many in which a voyage to the moon is the main theme. But the interest of Godwin’s little book lies in more particular incidents. It relates the strange adventures of a diminutive Spaniard, Domingo Gonsales, in the course of which he is constrained to make a voyage to the East Indies. On his return he is landed, by reason of sickness and with a negro as his sole companion, on the then uninhabited but (as Gonsales

calls it) 'blessed isle of St. Hellens'—to wit, St. Helena. Finding on the shores of this 'only paradise that the Earth yieldeth' a great quantity of wild swans, he commenced, partly for recreation and partly as having even then in his head some rudiments of the device he subsequently invented, to train a number of young birds to obey his wishes. Amongst other tricks he teaches them 'by little and little to fly with burthens,' and subsequently, by harnessing several of the birds together, he gets them to fly up carrying a lamb, whose happiness Gonsales much envies as being 'the first living creature to take possession of such a device.' The notion proved—nearly two hundred and fifty years later—to be strangely prophetic, for a sheep was actually one of the first animals (the others were a cock and a duck) to be carried up into the air as an experiment beneath the second hot-air balloon constructed by Montgolfier, which ascended from Versailles on September 19, 1783.

In his earlier endeavours with a team of birds, Gonsales finds some difficulty in devising a means whereby each 'gansa' may be made to bear a due proportion of the burden carried, and this he overcomes by a system of pulleys and weights. Incidentally the present writer was recently interested to find that this mechanical difficulty had occupied the mind of so remarkable a scientist and mechanician as Robert Hooke, who was born three years before the publication of Godwin's story, and who lived to be Secretary of the Royal Society between 1677 and 1682. Amongst the scientific papers in Hooke's handwriting now in the Society's library is to be seen a 'List of Experiments and Inventions,' which includes two entries of tantalising brevity to the student of early aeronautical endeavour. One is 'Various ways of Flying'—as to which it need only be remarked that Hooke is known to have conducted experiments with model flying-machines, though very little is known as to the nature of them. The other is 'The way of poisoning Gonsales Birds'—an entry which, if indeed it has ever before been noticed, may well have proved enigmatical even to the learned Fellows of England's premier scientific institution.

But to return to the fictitious adventures of Gonsales, whose own words (as imagined by Godwin) at this point bear quotation :

'At last after divers tryalls,' he says, 'I was surprized with a great longing to cause my self to be carried in the like sort. Diego my Moore was likewise possessed with the same desire, and but that otherwise I loved him well, and had need of his help, I should

have taken that his ambitious affection in very evill part: for I hold it farre more honour to have been the first flying man, than to be another Neptune that first adventured to sayle upon the sea:—this latter sentiment being remarkable as the earliest known expression of the view that for man the achievement of flight is a meritorious and honourable ambition.

For the rest of the adventures of Gonsales and all that he did—his eleven days' journey to the moon, the 'airie men' (or disembodied spirits) who thronged about him in his passage, his naïve account of the manners, customs, and language of the lunar inhabitants, and finally his return to earth—are they not written in the book of the chronicles of 'The Man in the Moone'? True it is that this little volume—with its queer engraving of Gonsales seated on his 'engine' (of which the artist's unmechanical imagination could make no more than a mere perch) drawn by ten 'gansas'—may not easily be acquired by reason of its rarity. But whosoever shall be fortunate enough to procure a copy will find some reward afforded by the entertainment of reading it.

It is frequently said that Godwin's flying fancies gave a hint to Bishop Wilkins for the well-known 'Discourse on the possibility of a passage to the Moon,' which was appended to his scientific treatise, 'The Discovery of a New World,' 1638, the ideas in which Wilkins expanded in the three oft-quoted chapters on flying contained in the 'Mathematical Magic' published ten years later. As a matter of fact, Wilkins specifically states in the 'Discourse' that having finished it, he 'chanced upon' Godwin's 'very pleasant and well-contrived fancy,' with some of the particulars wherein his own did 'unwittingly agree.' It is, on the other hand, quite clear that Godwin's romance—as already mentioned, several editions in French were printed at Paris—afforded hints which were elaborated by the fantastic imagination of Cyrano de Bergerac, as revealed in those extraordinary books, 'Histoire Comique des États et Empire de la Lune' and 'Histoire Comique des États et Empire du Soleil,' published posthumously in 1657 and 1662 respectively. Though (as being the work of a foreign writer) they do not come within the scope of the present survey, it may be said that while these 'comical histories' go far beyond the range of Godwin's entertaining little romance, they contain ideas and incidents which—as pointed out by Mr. Richard Aldington in his admirable and recently published translation of both the 'Voyages'—were obviously derived from the English prototype.

It is more to the point that the quaint notions of satirical intent which Cyrano de Bergerac puts into the mouth of his imaginary aerial voyager—for instance, the terrible indictment brought against him as ‘an animal accused of being a Man,’ by the PARLIAMENT OF BIRDS—afforded to Swift in turn, ideas of which he made use in ‘Gulliver’s Travels,’ notably in the conception of the ‘flying island’ in the ‘Voyage to Laputa.’ Certainly they must have been known to English readers, for a translation by Thomas St. Serf appeared in 1659, and a ‘newly Englished’ version by A. Lovell (with a frontispiece in the style of the plate to ‘The Man in the Moone’) followed in 1687.

Attributions of the indebtedness of one author to another must, however, usually be a matter of intelligent, as they are oft-times a matter of entertaining literary speculation. With Godwin, as with Cyrano de Bergerac—and, indeed, all the followers of Lucian—the *motif* afforded by a voyage to the moon was used as an opportunity for discoursing imaginatively, in the manner of detached comment or covert satire, on the characteristics of a race of beings differing widely from their mundane counterparts. To achieve so wondrous a voyage through space Godwin simply, but ingeniously, invents a novel method of employing the aerial propensities of birds. That idea in general may also be traced to widespread and much earlier sources—for instance, the story of the Persian king who (as related in the Shah-Nameh) essayed to ascend into the heavens drawn by four eagles, or that of the aerial flight experienced by Sindbad the sailor when he is carried aloft by the mythical roc, ‘that great bird,’ as Burton says in his ‘Digression of Air,’ which legend endowed with strength sufficient to carry up a man and horse, or even an elephant. Incidentally this avian notion of achieving flight persisted for at least two hundred years after Godwin’s day, as a method conceivably practicable if employed in conjunction with a balloon. In 1786 an attempt was actually made at Ranelagh—the projector displaying something of the spirit of Gonsales in his aspiration to ‘merit the name of the First Aerial Charioteer’—to ascend in a balloon drawn by ‘four harnessed eagles, perfectly tame, and capable of flying in every direction at their master’s will.’ Moreover as late as 1835 T. S. Mackintosh published an account (together with an attractive coloured engraving) of an ‘aerial ship,’ designed as capable of being drawn by a number of eagles or ‘strong pigeons.’ The scheme aroused considerable discussion, in the course of which it was ironically

suggested—though doubtless in ignorance of the seventeenth-century ‘gansas’ of Gonsales—that geese would be more appropriate birds to use for such an experiment!

Of later books which reflect or recall the ideas of Godwin and of the more scientifically minded Wilkins, it can only be said that the ‘Voyage to Cacklogallinia’—published in 1727 under the pseudonym of Capt. Samuel Brunt—if not wholly forgotten, is almost wholly unreadable. Embellished with a frontispiece of the imaginary voyager being conveyed through the air in a ‘palanquin’ drawn by four large birds, the book itself—in the nature of a political satire—is extremely dull, and the dullness is hardly relieved by such ‘flying’ episodes as the story affords. ‘A New Journey to the World of the Moon’ appeared anonymously as a political allegory in 1741; but here the idea of flight is wholly absent, inasmuch as the author adopts a much less entertaining method—viz. the projection of his own imagination. On the other hand winged flight is introduced as a notable feature in the ‘Travels of Hildebrand Bowman in Carnovirria, the powerful Kingdom of Luxovolupto,’ 1778, another anonymous and uncommon book of a satirical kind. A quaint or, as some booksellers would say, a ‘curious’ feature of this otherwise mainly dull volume is the account it contains of a class of charming ‘flying prostitutes,’ by whom the imaginary traveller is in danger of being carried off, and whose wings (though an object of unabashed imitation by the fashionable) develop as a consequence of and are recognised as a sign of unchastity.

But unquestionably the most thoroughgoing ‘flying romance’ in our older English literature is the well-known story of ‘Peter Wilkins’ (first published in 1751), which owes little to forerunners save in so far as it is probable that the hero’s name was suggested by the patronymic of the author of ‘Mathematical Magic.’ Of the writer, Robert Paltock, whose fame lives solely by reason of his anonymous romance, hardly more is known than that he lived for some years in Clement’s Inn, and on his death in 1767, was buried at Ryme Intrinsica, in Dorset. Indeed his authorship of ‘Peter Wilkins’ remained unknown until 1835, when it was revealed by the discovery of the original agreement for the sale of the manuscript to Robert Dodsley, the publisher.

The character of the story, which, with what Coleridge called its ‘desert island’ feeling, recalls that greater achievement in the literature of shipwreck and adventure, ‘Robinson Crusoe,’

can hardly be better conveyed than in the words of the original title-page :

'The Life and Adventures of Peter Wilkins, a Cornish Man : Relating particularly His Shipwreck, near the South Pole ; his wonderful Passage thro' a subterraneous Cavern, into a kind of New World ; his there meeting with a Gawry or flying woman, whose Life he preserv'd and afterwards married her ; his extraordinary Conveyance to the Country of Glums and Gawrys, or Men and Women that fly. . . . Taken from his own Mouth, in his Passage to England from off Cape Horn in America, in the Ship Hector.'

The title further informs the reader that the volumes are illustrated with 'cuts,' or engraved copper plates (by Boitard), 'clearly and distinctly representing the Structure and Mechanism of the Wings of the Glums and Gawrys, and the Manner in which they use them either to swim or fly.' It is more than doubtful, however, whether the illustrations and the detailed descriptions combined ever convey any more definite ideas than that these winged people were born with a highly peculiar composite covering of pliable ribs and springy membranes, which, when extended, becomes sufficiently rigid to form wings, and when closed, 'sits so close and compact to the body, as no tailor can come up to it.' Nevertheless the story is undeniably attractive—of the heroine, Youwarkee, Leigh Hunt declared with enthusiasm that 'a sweeter creature is not to be found in books'—though such delight as it conveys lies in Paltock's quaint imagination and the quiet charm of his narrative, rather than in the fact (perhaps in spite of it) that the author endowed his creations with 'graundeeds' or wings. Indeed beyond the frank curiosity evinced by Peter Wilkins as to the organic structure of the wings whereby his 'dear Youwarkee' is enabled to fly—an incident related with a *naïveté* and delicacy some modern novelists might well emulate—there is no suggestion throughout the book of that enthusiasm for flight as an achievement with which Godwin endowed Domingo Gonsales.

It may be added, on the other hand, that Paltock's imagination in the way of aerial contests far outran the stilted conception of his contemporary, Owen Cambridge, who (in the same year) had published in his satirical poem, 'The Scribleriad,' an account of an aerial contest of a sporting character between an Englishman and—a German! In the course of his adventures in Doorpt Swangeanti, or 'the land of flight,' Peter, called upon to defend

the kingdom against rebels, commands the 'Glums' (flying men) to bring cannons, powder, and shot from his wrecked ship—an achievement which induces the pregnant reflection that were his own countrymen able to adopt this aerial method of military transportation, 'the whole world would not stand before us.' On being attacked by the van of the rebel army—'consisting of about five thousand men, who flew in five layers, one over another'—Peter, in the character of the first anti-aircraft gunner, fires at close range with such effect as to bring down about three hundred of the enemy. Finally he completes the discomfiture of the enemy's aerial hosts by firing again with the cannons, with the result, he says, 'they fell so thick about me, that I had enough to do to escape being crushed to death by them'—a contingency which adds unthought-of horrors to recent highly-coloured conceptions of vast aerial operations in the next war.

Another 'desert island' romance of flying interest—written, according to Lowndes, in imitation of 'Peter Wilkins'—appeared in the same year under the title of 'The narrative of the Life and astonishing adventures of John Daniel, a smith, at Royston in Hertfordshire.' The aeronautical ideas of the author—the title-page conveys that the book is by the Rev. Ralph Morris—were of a more mechanical cast than those of Paltock, for the son of the shipwrecked smith is described as experimenting with plane surfaces on the resistance offered by the air, and the support thus afforded to his own weight. Subsequently the youth builds a machine consisting in the main of a flat surface (like a floor or stage), in a frame of wood and finely wrought ironwork. Beneath this were several ribbed wings—'cloathed with callicoe dipt in wax'—actuated by means of a pump, and enabling him to fly in the air 'without any other support than a sea mew hath.' Despite the doubts and fears of his father, the young mechanic mounts his 'Eagle,' begins to work his pump handle, and (in the words of the parent's narrative), 'rising gently from the posts, away he went, almost two miles; then working his contrary handle, as he told me, he returned again, and passed by me to the other end of the mountain; then soaring a little as he came near me again; Father, says he, I can keep her up, if you can guide her to the posts.' Having assisted in landing the machine on a prepared staging, the astonished parent is induced to go for a flight, when, 'making all fast, Father, says he, lie you, or sit close to the pump on that side, whilst I work it on this; and seeing me somewhat fearful, Don't

be afraid, says he, hold by the pump irons, you are as safe here as on the solid earth; then plying his handle, we rose, and away we went.' But as a whole the story has none of the literary merit of 'Peter Wilkins,' though the exploits in aviation above quoted are of interest as being the first attempt in English fiction to conceive flight achieved by mechanical means, and without the help of flapping wings.

To Dr. Johnson's famous 'Dissertation on the Art of Flying'—doubtless, as forming the sixth chapter of 'Rasselas,' more often read than Paltock's longer romance—it is unnecessary to do more than refer, the present writer having elsewhere discussed at some length Johnson's connection with imaginative flight and the invention of the balloon. His name affords a link with the first era of practical aeronautics, for though Johnson never actually witnessed a balloon ascent—despite the fact that near the close of his life he was in Oxford when James Sadler, the earliest English aeronaut, made his first ascent on November 12, 1784—he lived to write about and to discuss balloons as an invention which (in his own words) had at that time 'taken full possession, with very good claim, of every philosophical mind and mouth.' In view of the widespread interest and curiosity aroused by the earlier balloon ascents, both in France and England, it is not surprising that 'air-balloons' were seized upon by the scribblers of the day as an attractive and topical subject, affording scope for aerial adventures of a novel kind. The results, however, were almost wholly disappointing, and it is safe to say that of the 'balloon novels' which derived inspiration from, or (more truly) were prompted by Montgolfier's invention, none are worth reading to-day.

Possibly the only use made of the balloon in contemporary fiction that may still afford some diversion, is to be found in the super-marvellous incidents—the raising of the wreck of the *Royal George* by means of the buoyancy of a balloon, and so forth—which were added in 1786 to the 'Adventures of Baron Munchausen.' But such stuff as 'The Modern Atlantis, or the Devil in an Air Balloon,' 1784, was no more than an example of the then prevalent, but now unedifying 'annals of gallantry,' into which ballooning is merely introduced as the instrument of topical incidents. On the other hand, 'The Balloon, or Aerostatic Spy,' 1786, cast in the form of a 'novel,' is hardly less dreary reading, though the title was designed to allure by the promise of a 'series of adventures of an Aerial Traveller.' Incidentally, in adopting an 'aerostatic

machine' as the aerial instrument of his hero's wanderings over Europe, the author revealed himself as entirely ignorant of the principles of the balloon. For the 'machine' is endowed with an unfailing capacity to rise or fall, and is made to pass rapidly through or remain stationary in the air, just as the story requires—much as was done (though more briefly, and with specific intent) by Stevenson in 'The Ebb Tide' and Samuel Butler in 'Erewhon.'

But broadly speaking (as already suggested), the balloon in its earlier days was never effectively introduced into imaginative literature. Indeed it remained for Edgar Allen Poe—who was acquainted with Godwin's 'singular and somewhat ingenious little book,' as he calls it—to achieve in 'The Unparalleled Adventure of Hans Pfaall,' 1836, the first notable success in balloon fiction—a success not less complete than it was strangely paradoxical in the case of his subsequent 'Balloon-Hoax' story. For in the latter *jeu d'esprit* Poe's admirably circumstantial but purely imaginary account of a balloon voyage across the Atlantic completely deceived the newspaper editors of the day, and the hoax was actually printed as being an authentic record of an accomplished event!

J. E. HODGSON.

SOME REFLECTIONS OF A COUNTRY PARSON.

It is surprising how shallow people are in their classification of other people. I am ticketed as a country parson, and go about bearing on my person the marks of that confraternity, a thing of contempt. Yet I sometimes wonder. . . .

The Assistant-Director of Education, ex-elementary school-master, pompous and ponderous, has just paid us a visit. At a meeting of our managers he incidentally remarked, 'Well, what can you expect, seeing we have mainly to do with the country clergy!' I do not think he intended it for an insult; he was too pachydermatous. I think that for the moment he was oblivious of my presence. I cannot think he meant it personally, because he said 'good-bye' so pleasantly when he left. No; he was simply speaking, as we mostly do, by rule of thumb.

It is true I am now in a country living, and therefore I am a country parson, which is logic no one can gainsay. But the years of my life have been spent among the dockyard operatives and warrant-officers at a naval port in the south, among the miners of the north, the artisans and business men of the Midlands, and in an East London submerged parish, in all of which I had much work as a citizen as well as a clergyman. The neighbouring incumbents on three sides are in like case; they have not long been country clergy. One has been Public Examiner in the Mathematical School at Oxford, a member of ever so many committees, a Proctor and all that, and he had such a head for business that for some time he was Bursar of his college; the other was an ex-gaol and union and hospital chaplain, combining several offices, in a riverside population; the third had done notable work as an arch-deacon in a foreign land. You would not readily find four men with a wider or more varied experience. Yet fate tars us with the same brush, and we are supposed to know more about pigs than souls. On occasions when we attend the Ruridecanal Conference at a little bit of a county town, even the youngest curate present, not long emerged from a theological college, is wont in his public remarks to imply that the country clergy, compared with their town brothers, are a somewhat benighted and backward class of men. One need not always to be on the look out to detect a tone of superiority which cannot be hidden.

It is so frequently said that the clergy are unbusiness-like people that the saying has passed into a kind of proverb. Laymen who bring this charge little know the circumstances in which the clergyman is placed, and the difficulties he has to contend with owing to the unbusiness-like habits of the laity, upon whose voluntary help he has to depend. It must always be borne in mind that there is a great difference in efficiency between voluntary and paid work. The parishioner may be an excellent man of business in his own line; but in what he gives of his spare time to church work he is apt to take things more easily. This is perfectly natural, but it is the parson that has to bear the brunt of it in the long run. So it happens that the man of business, ordained in mature years, before very long is considered a bad man of business, not because he is one, but because circumstances are too strong for him. I can fancy the layman critic of the clergy sitting in his office, replete with every modern appliance for the expeditious dispatch of business—telephone, stenographer, staff; the produced ledger; the discovered item; the sharp, quick order to have the matter seen to at once. Not thus is it with the clergyman who has, say, twenty small parochial funds on his hands for lack of anyone else capable of undertaking the job. Of one of these accounts—and the same thing is true of all the rest,—the balance-sheet, overdue, cannot be issued because several collectors have not yet sent in their amounts. It is never satisfactory to distribute an unfinished balance-sheet in a parish, because it excites a hostile criticism which does harm to the good cause. But in our case there is an additional reason for not doing so. The unpunctual collectors, if their names were omitted, would resign at once as a protest against unfairness and also to shield themselves from unkind remarks on the part of their neighbours. These are things the clergyman has to reckon with, but which the man of business has not. Parochial work, especially in relation to money matters, demands a delicacy of treatment of which the outside world has no conception. Taking the typical case of one of the unpunctual collectors on one of the various small funds, the clergyman communes with himself: 'If I write about it to Mrs. A——, it is ten to one she will not answer my letter. Besides, it's risky to inquire about money: she'll be sure to think I am accusing her of purloining it. I'll go and call on her.' When he can get a convenient time he does so; the distance is a mile and three-quarters across the fields—it breaks into an afternoon. He fails to find her at home, and cannot make

anyone hear. He has to put it off till next week ; he calls again, with the same result. On his third call he is told by her next-door neighbour that she has gone away and won't be home for six weeks. *It would be impolitic to send a letter after her and put her to the trouble of remitting by postal order, when you consider that these are days of heavy postage and that the amount she has collected may not be more than a shilling.* From this you will see the situation of a clergyman in his parish as compared with a layman in his office ; and is it any wonder that he gets a reputation for unbusiness-like qualities, and that his balance-sheets are issued long after the proper time ?

Voluntary work is nothing like as satisfactory as paid labour from the strictly business point of view. While I am on this subject I may as well tell you about our parish magazine. We have twelve distributors, each taking a district ; you must understand that they do it for the love of the thing, and their efforts are highly to be praised. But to come to business. In view of an alteration in the magazine, proposed by the diocese, it was necessary to call the distributors together to consider the question of the extra expense, and to ascertain the prospects of an increased circulation to make up for it. At the meeting two distributors out of the twelve turned up—which was useless. After a while another meeting was summoned ; three came—which was also useless. Whereupon I put not my trust in notices by post cards, but went round personally. This took me three long afternoons, for I had to call several times on some of them before I found them at home. But I succeeded ; they all turned up at the next meeting, at which I, knowing my people, was agreeably surprised. Myself (after full explanations) : ' Now, ladies, you thoroughly understand this, that the fifteenth of next month is the latest date at which the diocese must know how many copies we shall want. Approximately, of course. That is just three weeks from now. Can you canvass your districts and let me know at least by the fourteenth, or earlier if you can ? ' The meeting terminated in a happy frame of mind, and we parted with a good deal of handshaking ; they were quite able to do it, and would be sure to let me know before the date. But what about the result ? What about the business aspect of the question ? From one, indeed, of the distributors I got a communication that she could dispose of thirty-one copies in her district, but from none of the others have I received a word of any sort from that day to this, although the time is long past and the

opportunity is gone. My efforts have been fruitless, and my work thrown into the void. This is not by any means to cast blame upon the distributors, without whom a magazine would be impossible ; *it is only to bring some light to bear on the circumstances in which the criticised cleric has to conduct the more commercial side of his sacred calling.*

One of our sidesmen, a recent arrival, is never tired of pressing on me his opinion that no man ought to be ordained without first having had a business training. Why he should be always giving me this information I do not know. But he has said it over and over again. I expect the sight of my clerical collar suggests to him a familiar train of thought. One day last summer he came to me and said, 'By the way, I want you to lend me the old school-desks ; we're having a whist-drive at the club.' He had just started a club for the youths of the village. I replied, 'With pleasure. But won't you buy them ? Here's your opportunity ; the school fund is in need of the money.' 'No,' he said, 'I'm not a purchaser. We have no intention of buying ; we only want them occasionally.' These superannuated school-desks had been a great nuisance ever since they were stored for convenience in the loft over my stables. Parishioners were in the habit of borrowing them without remembering to return them. He would doubtless find some of the desks in the loft and some scattered up and down about the village. I gave him the padlock key of the loft, which he lost, because, as he said, he lent it to another man who failed to return it, and he maintained that it was the other man lost it. For several months I heard nothing more about these desks. I did not know if my sidesman had had any or how many or what until J—— D——, an enterprising young man of the village, called and bid me an offer for the lot, which offer I was glad to take, both for the sake of helping the school fund and also because it supplied the opportunity at last of getting rid of what had long proved to be a bone of contention among my people. Even a slight acquaintance with village life will enable you to appreciate the situation. The next thing that happened was : my sidesman-friend wrote me a letter containing the iron hand in the velvet glove, wishful for no break in our amicable relations, but charging me with unbusiness-like procedure, and resigning his membership of various parochial committees. He also absented himself from church for several Sundays in succession. Calling on me subsequently in a friendly spirit, he acquitted me of a conscious

breach of faith, and argued that if I had had a business training I should in the circumstances have recognised the justice of his claim to a 'first refusal.' And as we parted on the doorstep he again returned to the subject: 'Now, if you had been a business man this thing wouldn't have happened'; and although I am of slender build he put his finger on the pit of my stomach, adding, 'You see my point—eh?' I confess I did not. But I am afraid the incident of the desks will intensify his belief that the Church of England will make no headway until it possesses a more human and business-like clergy.

His absence from church did not take me by surprise; it was just what I expected. Every clergyman knows that that sort of thing is an invariable result. 'Why men don't attend church' is a perennial topic. Frequently letters are written to the papers about it. It is a subject as persistent as the sea-serpent. Numerous explanations are given for this absenteeism, most of which are wide of the mark. Men don't attend church because, simply, they just don't, and they are unable to afford any other real reason for it. They stay away from church with as much reason as once they came to church. We are apt to view the world from our own standpoint, and to invest other people with our own feelings. So the prominent theologian, walking on the heights, attributes the decadence of public worship to the disturbing influence of the Higher Criticism, for instance, on the minds of the laity, or to the prevalence of fifth-rate sermons, whereas the fact is not one in a thousand laymen has any idea of the Higher Criticism; and if they had, and if they thought it detracted from the Bible which they revere but never read, they would in protest attend church in the same spirit as our Tommies fought at Waterloo or Wipers. And as for fifth-rate sermons, they at least, as a rule, contain the same subject-matter as the Creeds; and if our people had to listen to a first-rate sermon by a first-rate theologian they would declare it too dull for words (which would be true from their point of view); they would hesitate at coming to church again, and they would exclaim: 'Oh, give us back our youngest curate!' No; they are too busy about money-making, about games, about politics to have time for anything else. In our public exhortations we have forgotten the Parable of the Sower, and now there is nobody there to listen.

Personally, of course, I have had worshippers giving up divine worship; but it has not been for spiritual reasons, unless you make spirituality a term of the widest possible signification.

There was the jobber, for instance, not intellectual, but dour and silent, who, with his wife, was a constant worshipper at evensong on Sundays. Suddenly he ceased, and because he was a domestic law-giver his wife had to cease too ; at least that was what she said. I questioned him ; but he as much as told me to mind my own business. It never pays to over-press people to attend church, because it leads them to suspect that you have some ulterior motive. I would even go so far as to say that people are the more ready to come if they feel that their presence is not wanted ; for such is human nature, which, when all is said, has a great deal to do with going to church or any other place of worship. Both he and his wife were ordinarily pleasant on the occasions of my usual visits, but the subject of church-going was taboo ; they were determined people. Some years afterwards her mother, a dear old body, came to live in the parish. Pledging me solemnly never to divulge a word, 'because, you know, Charles has such a violent temper I'm afraid what he might do,' she let me into the secret of his not going any more to church. It was that at a meeting the churchwardens had thanked some benefactors, and that the jobber, who without charge had put a rivet in a sagging seat, was not even mentioned. It is sixteen years now since he has, for that reason, divorced public worship from his version of Christianity. We on the spot see in it, too, an illustration of the hereditary principle. His father was similar—that is, broadly speaking, on general lines. He began as a Churchman ; then he joined the Salvation Army ; then he migrated to the Congregational chapel ; the next migration was he attached himself to the Primitive Methodists ; then he was enrolled as a member of the Baptist community : but he quarrelled with them all, or they with him, and now he, too, goes nowhere. Then there was the case of our churchwarden, who ought to have known better. He was a business man, of generous views, and with no mind for the little-nesses of the distinctions between the various sections of Christianity, yet preferring on the whole the Church of England because it was the State religion, and so had first claim. He, who had been a regular attendant at Sunday Mattins (and a communicant) from the time he was made churchwarden (that was three years ago), suddenly absented himself from church for the space of three months. But what was the cause of it ? For some time it was a mystery ; he would only hum and ha about it. By degrees it leaked out. The latest sidesman, a newcomer, being given an alms bag, had in perfect innocence collected from that set of pews

which the churchwarden had been wont to take himself. His sense of injury was thus expressed : ' If Mr. J.— (the new sidesman) wants to be churchwarden, by all means let him be. I don't mind.' Proper explanations having been forthcoming, he returned to church ; but the affair occupied three months.

That people at worship do not always know what is what, I have serious grounds for believing. From a church, a respectable, suburban, pew-rented church—the curacy of which, after I had preached a trial sermon, was pressed upon me, so the vicar wrote to me, by the urgent and unanimous wish of the congregation—I was practically kicked out before three months had passed. It happened in this way. I had observed for several weeks a discontented and stand-offish look on the Vicar's face whenever he approached me. Then one day he took the bull by the horns.

' Look here,' he said, ' I'm afraid you won't suit after all. I've had an anxious time of it ever since you came.'

' Why ? ' I asked.

' Because,' he replied, ' people are threatening to give up their seats.'

' But why ? '

' Because they object to your sermons.'

' But I thought,' I interposed, ' you told me how delighted they were when I preached on probation ? '

' So they were,' he replied ; ' but some of the more important seat-holders have changed their minds since then.'

' May I ask who they are ? '

' Certainly. Mr. Brown was furious at your sermon on " The Sabbath." He declared it too childish for words ; and I must honestly say I felt inclined to agree with him to a great extent.'

' Funny ! I wrote that sermon out. A paper called *Great Thoughts* has been offering a prize of two guineas for the best essays on various subjects. " The Sabbath " was one of them. I sent up the sermon as an essay. It won the two guineas.'

The Vicar was a bit taken aback. Recovering himself, he went on :

' Then there's Mrs. Jones. She says she won't come to church again if you preach, because she objects to being told from the pulpit that if she wants meat she must go to the butcher for it.'

Mrs. Jones was an exceedingly well-dressed woman.

The sermon in question was about Dives and Lazarus ; and what I had said was that Dives apparently did not give directly

to the poor, and that no doubt he soothed his conscience by maintaining that the cost of his establishment circulated money by which the poor were indirectly benefited. At his banquets much meat was served up; thus the butcher would be benefited, and the butcher's hirelings would get their wages, and so they too would be benefited.

So I explained.

'Excuse me,' said the Vicar impatiently; 'but are we not wandering from the point, which is, not what you said in the sermon, but what Mrs. Jones is under the impression you said? As her pastor I must protect her interests and see her angle of vision; and she is firmly convinced that you told her from the pulpit that if she wanted meat she must go to the butcher's to get it. She is a most influential woman and threatens to leave the church.'

I admitted I saw his difficulty.

'Besides,' the Vicar continued, 'Mr. Robinson is up in arms. He hasn't been to church for a month. He talks about giving up his seat unless I get rid of you. He took a dislike to your sermon on "Baptism."'

'But,' I argued, 'I said nothing offensive. I wasn't unorthodox. I hardly mentioned doctrine. Briefly saying it was a sacrament, I dwelled chiefly on the necessity of living up to our baptismal vows.'

'That may be so,' said the Vicar; 'but it doesn't alter the fact that he has taken umbrage. He says you are a Jesuit in disguise.'

As yet the Vicar had produced but three malcontents; but he was manifestly uneasy in his mind, and to cap his argument he said he could sense general discontent. There was, in the circumstance, only one thing I could do: I tendered my resignation on the spot; and then he was a different man and was quite pleasant.

I did not at the time know who Mr. Robinson was, but subsequently I made confidential inquiries. He was this sort of man. He had a sitting at the church, which he attended on Sunday mornings; he had a sitting at the Baptist chapel, which he attended on Sunday evenings; and, though he was over sixty, he had not yet been baptised. This happened in my younger days; but it gave me the impression, which time has failed to eradicate, that in the National Church we may encounter strange bedfellows.

Justice compels me to say the Vicar was strictly a manuscript preacher; he kept his eyes glued to the page. Unfortunately for

myself, I preached without notes, not eloquently, but with some fluency. When I came the Vicar started to preach, as we say, *extempore*, but he had full notes which he consulted so frequently, and he lost the thread of his discourse so many times, that the general effect was not good. He had a very sonorous and powerful voice, and when he read straight off from the manuscript without a stop he filled the church with a constant succession of bell-like tones, which created an atmosphere the people liked. The opening sentences of the first sermon I heard him preach have not yet faded from my memory, notwithstanding the passage of time. It was my first Sunday at his church, the Sunday after Ascension Day, 189-. He began: 'At this most holy season of the Christian year, brethren beloved, we celebrate the anniversary, some nineteen hundred years after the event, of the wonderful Ascension of our Divine Master into the heaven of heavens, far above all principalities and powers. Let us pause awhile and try to visualise that sacred scene in that far-off Orient land; let us in imagination stand in the shoes of the original disciples and attempt to see with their eyes, yet not unmindful of the supreme fact, revealed to St. Thomas, that blessed are they who have not seen and yet have believed. Before their astonished gaze our dear Master ascends into the empyrean, into the deep blue dome of the Eastern sky, the antechamber of infinity, in the chariot of the Ascension; in the chariot, mark you, of everlasting victory; wafted by the zephyrs of the Holy Spirit; drawn by the twin-steeds of Justice and Mercy, their hoofs shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace; and holding in His riven Hands the reins of Omnipotence and Infallibility; until at length vast snow-white masses of billowy cloud, encircling in the skies, received Him from their enraptured gaze, and He was lost to sight.' The rest of the sermon proceeded in this figurative and flamboyant strain; and because it was powerfully delivered in a fine sonorous voice which filled the church, it was not without an effect. Of practical teaching there was none. The present generation, indeed, may not be conversant with such preaching: it has fallen on better times; for this was more than thirty years ago. May it not account for the general ignorance of the doctrines of the Gospels so prevalent, at least among the older portion of the laity? One can sympathise with the position of a clergyman compelled by the exigencies of circumstances to descend from such flights of oratory to the more limited potentialities of *extempore* addresses; and one can imagine the shock to the feelings of the congregation, nurtured on this material Sunday after Sunday,

when it was suddenly confronted with plain teaching in plain language.

As the clergyman with experience knows what it is to have worshippers leave his church, so he knows, too, what it is to have fresh worshippers come in. At first I used to take the credit to myself, or I attributed it to a change of heart, or to a readjustment of their doctrinal belief; but the cumulative effect of a constant succession of indisputable incidents forced me unwillingly into a more rational view of the matter. They say now that no miracle ought to be accepted until every possible mundane explanation is first explored. This should hold good with regard to migrations from chapel to church or from church to chapel. In a long and varied experience I can recall but one case where conscience was at the bottom of it. It happened in the rich suburb of a Midland town, and he was a chartered accountant. He was free-spoken about his conversion, and said things in a way that would have surprised a Regius Professor of Divinity had he been there to listen. But we, the common clergy, see bypaths of human thought that bishops and others have no conception of.

'Yes,' he said, 'I've cut the painter. I've given up my sitting at chapel for good—told the minister so, straight to his face; gave him five pounds to relieve his feelings. I've come over to your Church for always.'

'Would it be impertinent for me to ask why?'

'With pleasure,' he replied. 'You clergy have got the Apostolic Succession, and the Dissenting ministers haven't. You clergy are M.A.'s of Oxford or Cambridge, and they are nothing of the sort. A place of worship without the Apostolic Succession won't do for me. I want the real thing. I put it point-blank to the minister, who is not a bad sort of fellow. I said, "Produce your M.A. hood, and I'll stay on."'

'And what did the minister say to that?'

'He never said a word. He knew he hadn't a leg to stand on,' replied the convert.

But that, too, was many years ago in one of my early curacies. To return to more modern times, from the various chapels in our country district we frequently have temporary recruits, so far as attendance is concerned, especially after their numerous tea-fights, at which a want of harmony often takes place. In time one ceases to attach much importance to these sudden conversions. Occasionally we have had a whole family migrating from a chapel and settling down with us. This was the case with a former church-

warden, now removed from the neighbourhood. He had been the great man at the Unitarian chapel, and it must have cost him a pretty penny. The cable there had parted. I trusted to his assurance that it was no question of doctrine, and that he was just the same doctrinally in church as he had been in chapel; nor was he the sort of man to tell me this if he had any idea that the subject of doctrine was part of the situation or was calculated to make any difference. As he was an influential person, at the next Vestry he was elected People's Warden. So we had a churchwarden not yet orthodox, not yet confirmed, not yet a communicant; and he was far too old to unfix his mind and to do these things, which he thought were useless for doing at his age, and had efficacy only if they had been done at an earlier period of life. It is a difficult problem, but it is one of the disadvantages of the Establishment where the boundaries are not well defined and the State may loom larger than the Church. Complaining one day, as churchwarden, of the general meanness of our worshippers when he took round the alms bag, he said, 'Me and my family always gives eightpence a Sunday.' At the chapel he had left it must, all told, have cost him at the least eighteen shillings a Sunday, if you take an average of the times he had to put his hand into his pocket for the support of the denomination. Truly, from that point of view, the Church of England provides the cheapest religion obtainable in the British Isles, and people are beginning to find it out. For this reason we shall never lack a certain number of recruits.

The clergyman's is a life of successive disappointments. Not so long ago I felt I had met at last a really genuine case. Miss C——, an elderly maiden lady, had left the Baptist chapel, and had settled down with us. She was so demure, so saint-like in looks, so quiet, so devout, and so regular—never missing a Sunday—that I had hopes. The official who combines in himself the duties of clerk, vergier, grave-digger, bell-ringer, and acting churchwarden said:

'Us 'ad better 'ave the doors locked to-morrow, being as 'tis Bank 'oliday? The riff-raff gets in, and behaves themselves disgracefully, laughing and chattering with their 'ats on, and leaving things about. Them Dissenters 'as no notions of reverence.'

'We must not,' I said, 'run down the Dissenters. There are Dissenters and Dissenters, just as there are Church-people and Church-people. There is Miss C——, for instance, lately come over to us. She sets an example to us all in excellence of deportment in church.'

'Her be respectable enough,' was his reply. 'None of us'll dispute that. So was 'er father afore 'er; terribly earnest man, but main dead against the Church. If it 'adn't been for he, their chapel'd never have been built. Partickler Baptists, they calls theirselves, mortal enemies o' the old Church. They'll miss she; her's bin a good friend to them nigh on forty year.'

'Shows what conscience can do—I mean her reconciliation to the Church,' I said.

'Don't know nothing about no conscience,' said the verger. 'Consciences be queer things. Don't ee know why her come over? This be the rights o' the matter. Two year ago they was for having the gallery at their chapel pulled down, sort of improvement-like. Them as 'ad sittings in the gallery was offered sittings in the body of the chapel, the nave, as you might say. Miss C—— wouldn't come down; nor another woman. So they two sat up in the gallery by theirselves. Then the other wumman died. So Miss C—— 'ad the gallery to 'erself more'n eighteen months or so; terribly determined wumman! A while back they fixed to have the gallery down, Miss C—— or no Miss C——; then her comed over to us. Varra obstinate wumman and touchy-like! Not but what she's respectable and all that.'

Thus was my last bubble pricked. To a clergyman with a high standard this is a sad world and full of disappointments.

The reader must not imagine that I take a jaundiced view of things: it is not that at all. One must regard facts. There is a lot of good in people, progressive good. No one can be a clergyman without knowing it; and it does not argue evil if people are unable to appreciate at their orthodox value our sectarian differences. Where can be the justice of blaming a Dissenter for not being loyal to Dissent if he never rightly knew what Dissent meant; and why blame a Churchman for leaving your church if he never knew what Churchmanship was—which in all charity is the case with the vast majority of those that go to church or chapel? You may not judge a man faithless until you can prove that he has betrayed his standard of faith. From your standpoint he may be a rotter; the fallacy is, you credit him with your standpoint, which he hasn't got and never had. We are all rationalists now, owing to the dismissal of the geocentric theory. The stage in thought ordinary orthodox people have reached is this: they are told of the velocity of light which, travelling with unspeakable rapidity, takes years to get to us from some comparatively near star. Our God is the Creator and Controller of this infinite immensity. The natural

conclusion follows: How can the sprinkling of a few drops of water (baptism) affect man's eternal destiny? Materially speaking, in this material universe (and the ordinary orthodox man at bottom is a materialist, perhaps unconsciously) it is negligible. But this sprinkling with water is of faith; so faith goes. But the Church teaches it? So the Church goes too. Anthropomorphism is not yet extinct. Ordinary people, when they think of God, still think of Him in terms of man—a sort of superman sitting at the centre or at the head of these gigantic affairs. And how in the name of common sense can He care a straw about a drop of consecrated water? He must be far too busy, and He must have His hands far too full of tremendous issues to be particular about a minim or two of baptismal water. For, as I say, anthropomorphism still prevails among ordinary orthodox folk, and among the learned if they only knew it. True, the microscope is the antidote to the telescope; but it is the telescope fills our vision. It is this and nothing else that accounts for the slump in revealed religion.

Academical clergymen now say that if we reconstruct the Creeds, and chop up the Liturgies, and leave out this and put in that, people will begin to fill the now empty churches again, and we shall have the naves crowded once more and the altar-steps thronged with kneeling penitents. But nothing of the sort is likely to happen. It is hitting the wrong nail on the head; the people concerned do not care an atom about such *minutiae*. You may reduce the Apostles' Creed to 'I believe in God and man; in eternal destiny; in good and not in evil. Amen,' and you will not attract a single person to church in consequence of it. Academical people have no understanding of their fellow-countrymen, and see things that bear no relationship to the truth, and repeat them. A prominent Modernist has just been telling us that 'the things that have been shaken out of the hearts and minds of modern educated Englishmen still remain in our Church's formularies, in our Prayer Book, in our hymn-book.' This may well be true; and from it he proceeds to establish a conclusion which is false. He goes on to tell us that 'the result may be seen in the decline in the number of children in our Sunday schools.' Does he intend this for a joke? If so, it is too broad. Any common-garden clergyman with any acquaintanceship with Sunday-school children or their parents would tell him at once that he is talking much nonsense, and that it would be equally appropriate to argue a slump in Sunday-school attendance as an effect of Einstein's lectures in this country on Relativity. When will our leaders learn to see facts? The remark

of the north-country miner who never went to any place of worship is a truer pointer to the religious state of feeling in the country. When he was told that his children were being taught Mariolatry in the school, he said, 'Oh, I don't mind! Let 'em larn everything.' Of course, that was before the days of Socialistic Sunday schools with their political propaganda.

The arrival of a new clergyman in a parish generally dislocates affairs to some extent. One of my initial duties was the distribution of a small periodic charity which gave half a crown to some thirty persons at the incumbent's discretion. There came a knock at the door, and the lady entered.

'I have been for some time,' she informed me, 'wishful to see you. You forgot to give Mrs. Blue (that was her mother) any of Bacon's charity.'

I apologised, for then I did not know of the existence of Mrs. Blue.

'We've always been strong Churchpeople,' she continued, 'and never anything else—never gone to chapel. But if you omit Mrs. Blue's name from the next list, I and my family shall no longer come to church—we shall go to chapel. I thought I had better tell you beforehand.'

It was quite true what she said. She had always been a strong Churchwoman—the verger corroborated it,—and she was a most respectable woman.

Now her threat of future consequences undoubtedly looks bad on paper, but it was not so bad in reality. In most parishes are a few 'Die-hards'—people who will never go from church to chapel, or from chapel to church,—but they may be counted almost on the fingers of one hand. It is not so with the majority. The majority have minds oblivious of, or indifferent to, or superior to, all small distinctions of creed and denomination. Since the Church of England countenances mixed marriages this is not to be wondered at, unless you feel disposed to wonder at inevitable consequences. The Reunion idea may be new to Lambeth, but among ordinary folk it has been a *fait accompli* these many years—not ministerially of course, which is no business of theirs, but laically, which is. Most of my own congregation are *Dissenters*; not that I can place any reliance upon their permanence or be sure of them next Sunday—for if there is anything special going on at one of their chapels they will readily forsake me for it. Outwardly they are most good-natured, and take things as they come. They have the larger Unity, and esteem all denominations alike. Why, my own brother, a layman, an educated man of the world, an Englishman down to

the roots of him—something of an old-fashioned Evangelical, critical of Rome—when he attends a place of worship as often as not goes to a certain Carmelite church because ‘the nuns sing so sweetly.’ This is a religious England our academical leaders know not of, otherwise they would not say the things they do.

In religion it never pays to enter into argument; you invariably get the worst of it, for your opponent does not regard your premises, and, moreover, we are all of us prone to manufacture suitable premises of our own. I found this out years ago, when I was young. She belonged to what claims to be the educated classes, and was a new-comer, and a Baptist. As she was stiff and reserved, I thought she may have resented my visit, and I rose to go. On the way from the drawing-room to the front door, I said: ‘As you say you have not yet been to chapel since you came—well, our church is close at hand if you . . .’ What was in my mind when I said this was: I had often noticed that the propinquity of a place of worship had something to do with the form of a man’s faith. Keeping my eye open, I had been struck with the fact that when Wesleyans, for instance, went to live near a Congregational chapel they became Congregationalists, and that when Primitive Methodists took a house in the close neighbourhood of a Baptist chapel, they sooner or later became Baptists. It was just the same with Churchpeople: when some of my flock took one of the new villas a long way off from us but quite near an undenominational place of worship, they settled down there and embraced that faith. But said the lady, ‘And why, pray, should I come to your church?’ This gave me the opening that I wanted. I said: ‘There is too much disunity; we should be all one.’ ‘I agree with you,’ she said. I continued: ‘And your coming to us would be a step, however small, in the promotion of the desired unity.’ She said: ‘But why not you come over to us?—it would be the same step towards unity either way.’

I put it to her as gently as I could that, fully granting the perfect equality of all the various Christian denominations, still there must be a rallying-point somewhere, and that the fairest way all round was for the younger communities to come back to the older community, the Mother Church, from which they had split off.

‘But that,’ said she, ‘is the reason why you should come back to us.’

I asked her what her meaning was.

She replied: ‘You a clergyman, and not know it! Well, St. John the Baptist was older than Christ, wasn’t he?’

I admitted it was so in a certain sense.

'Therefore,' she argued, 'the Baptist Church is older than the Christian Church. We come from St. John the Baptist. Now you see?'

'Seriously,' I asked, 'do you mean to assert that your Church was founded by St. John the Baptist, and not by our Lord?'

'I do,' she said; 'and that's why we're an older Church than you are, and why you should come over to us.'

That was quite a new way (to me) of looking at things, and I told her so; then she shut the door in my face.

The impatient reader who jumps to sudden conclusions will maintain that the lady was evidently pulling my leg; but I assure him it was not so. She was as much in earnest as a strong partisan well could be: she meant every word she said.

I have since discovered that her idea is not confined to her. Several Baptists whom I have come across up and down the country are under the same impression—that they derive, not from Christ, but from John the Baptist. Hence their name; so they explained.

In the popular imagination the Higher Critic is supposed to be a bespectacled gentleman of profound learning and industry, of a bold independence of mind, of secluded habits in an English University or German town. In matter of fact, he is much more numerous; indeed, he is ubiquitous in the parishes. Every Englishman almost is a Higher Critic in his way, not by the acquired right of learning and research, but by the natural right of birth and intuition. And he will often appear upon the scene where you least expect his presence. We had a meeting of church workers and communicants to sign a petition against a proposed departure from some teaching of the Gospel. The reader will understand that I read out to the meeting a simple saying of Jesus, eloquent in its directness and incapable of more than one meaning. Then arose a business man, educated as things go, who was a regular worshipper, a devout communicant, sidesman, school manager, and an occasional server at the altar.

He said, 'Excuse my interrupting.'

I said 'Certainly.'

He said, 'Well, Rector, with all due respect to our Blessed Lord, I beg to differ from Him on that point.'

Could any Modernist or Higher Critic, however wide his fame, have put the matter more concisely? And until then I had always considered him about the most orthodox member of our congregation.

THE QUEST.

BY MARMADUKE PICKTHALL.

ONE afternoon in February 1920, Mr. Manilal Gurjar, B.A., LL.B., went to the college on the hill above the city, traversed the compound gay with flower-beds and trimmed walks, and eventually reached the presence of the Principal. He had come to ask his old headmaster for advice, and also to return a book which had been lent to him.

'Politics! That is the science I desire to study,' he remarked. 'This book which you so kindly gave me argues of another subject. It does naught avail.'

'Then I am afraid I don't know how to help you, Manilal. This is a treatise on political economy, and there is nothing else in politics which can be called a science. All the rest of it you must deduce from history and geography and, for contemporary matters, from reviews and newspapers.'

The jovial, red-faced Englishman smiled wonderingly down on the preoccupation of the Hindu graduate. Then he looked round the spacious, shady, comfortably furnished room, and out of the tall window at the compound with its squatting gardeners in blazing sunlight. His eyes returned to dwell on Manilal, who spoke again, beginning eagerly:

'But I have read in English books how men who have completed their career as students with conspicuous success go in for politics, which is a pursuit more honourable than law or medicine or the Civil Service. I have obtained the best degree and I will study politics. I beg you, sir, to introduce me to that science.'

Manilal's eyes were softly but intensely radiant, making his clear-cut face a lamp of mind. The Englishman's expression, on the other hand, was rather an effect of brow and jawbone than of eyes, which were at that moment so expressionless that Manilal received the desperate impression of praying to an idol only painted with the colours of intelligence—an impression which did not diminish when the idol spoke.

'In England it is different. To go into politics means to stand for Parliament. There is nothing like it in India.'

Manilal was silent for a moment, pondering. At length he said : ' Nevertheless we read in newspapers the phrases " Indian politics," " European politics," " World politics." How then, sir, can the practice of the science be confined to England ? '

' Ah ! ' cried the Englishman, as seeing light at last. ' Politics in that sense is the term for history in the making. It means the aggregate of current movements and events.'

' Exactly, sir ; and what I ardently desire at present is instruction in the true significance of such phenomena. I seek the formula which holds them all together. For me they are all scattered, unintelligible ; they confound my brain. I seek the spiritual reason' . . .

Just then loud hooting of a horn was heard, and through the window could be seen an Englishman in flannels driving a two-seater car a little recklessly between the flower-beds. The Principal sprang up with manifest relief. He said : ' You must excuse me, Manilal. A friend has come to fetch me to a game of tennis. You ought really to consult a politician, but the trouble is they're all seditious here in India. If you do find that spiritual reason you might let me know, for you will certainly have solved a problem which has baffled all of us till now.'

Manilal's face grew bright with pleasure. He replied : ' I thank you, sir, for such benign encouragement.'

Going out by a side door adjacent to the servants' quarters—the same by which he had come in—Manilal crossed the compound to the gate, whence, skirting the college railings, he came shortly to an avenue of tulip trees, with dusty stems, which led him steeply down into a city street.

The wide road streamed with painted bullock-carts and horse-drawn vehicles of divers shapes, most of them with brightly-coloured awnings, whose drivers kept on shouting to make way. On either side were low shops under trees. Manilal entered one of these, distinguished by the legend ' Shamdas & Co.' in yellow letters on a blue board on its doorpost, and sat down by the owner who merely touched his hand by way of welcome, being busy with a customer. When that business was concluded, he turned round to Manilal and asked :

' What luck ? '

' He gave me high encouragement,' the graduate replied, ' declaring that my quest is of supreme importance to humanity.'

' And what will you do next ? '

'He told me to confer with politicians, but warned me against those who advocate seditious practices.'

'In other words he bade you seek a bird, but not a bird with beak or feathers, legs or tail,' said Shamdas with a grin. 'What is sedition, I should like to know. Define me that!'

'It is a plot to overthrow the Government.'

'Not in our country. Here it is to be disliked by the police-inspector. That is the simple truth of it, my learned friend.'

'That is a secondary or perhaps tertiary phenomenon. I seek the spiritual reason,' answered Manilal.

Fresh customers entering the shop, he went and sat upon a chair outside.

Close by there grew a splendid baobab with dome of leaves and hanging roots like tresses. Beside the dusty road it formed a species of pavilion in which all sorts of people took their ease. There was a barber on a strip of carpet shaving the hair beneath a peasant's armpits. A group of merchants sumptuously dressed, sat in a ring on stools and gossiped eagerly. Another group of lower rank was playing cards. Hawkers were selling betel-nut and *pan*-leaves, sweets, sherbets, hand-mirrors, combs, pen-knives. Beyond the hanging tresses of the tree, upon the road, pedestrians and carts in single file were moving in two endless streams, blurring the sunlight with the dust raised by their going. All of a sudden there was a loud peremptory shouting. Manilal beheld resplendent human forms on horseback traversing the dust-cloud with decision, heralding a carriage drawn by two fine horses at full speed, in which a lady, wrapped in blue and silver like the moon, lolled arrogantly. Most of the idlers underneath the baobab stood up. Manilal heard someone say 'the Maharani!'

It all seemed meaningless, annoying to a mind preoccupied with an idea which should provide the clue to it. He who had found spiritual rapture in arithmetic could not be happy in a world whose rhythms and tidal movements were obscure to him.

Shamdas, his friend, came out at length and stood beside him. Pressing his shoulder, he remarked: 'I know the man for you. He lives across the bridge in Hobson Buildings. He is a Rao Bahadur and a First-class Magistrate (retired), reputed wise. A friend of the police, so he is not seditious.'

'I go to visit him at once,' said Manilal.

He made to start, but Shamdas stopped him, saying: 'I hope that he will satisfy you by his answer, for much I fear to see you

waste your faculties upon some problem which may be insoluble save in another life. You wish some day to make a fortune, I suppose ?'

Manilal supposed so too, but that was for the future. He took some trouble to explain to Shamdas that knowledge is an object in itself, the noblest possible, and those who give themselves to its pursuit must do so utterly. To think of earthly gain was far beneath them. They might be sure that if they won to knowledge then their worldly needs would be supplied abundantly, without their efforts. Such was his eloquence that Shamdas was profoundly moved, and felt ashamed of his obtuse materialism.

Manilal crossed the bridge to Hobson Buildings.

'His Honour is within. Your blessed name ?'

A serving-man received his card. Manilal stood awhile in contemplation of a geometrical design which had been traced by someone in red powder on the doorstep ; then the serving-man returned and led him down a passage, through a room elaborately furnished in the English manner, on to a veranda where the master of the house reclined upon a mattress in the shade. He was wearing a beflowered bedgown and a gold-embroidered cap, and had been pulling at a hookah, the tube of which he laid aside as Manilal drew near. His face was large and brown and closely wrinkled, with bushy grey moustache and eyebrows, and small twinkling eyes. At the other end of the veranda, his lady was arranging household linen with the maid, keeping an eye upon a fat and stolid child who played upon the floor with coloured beads.

The First-class Magistrate (retired) picked up the card which Manilal had sent before him, and inquired : 'To what am I indebted for this unexpected pleasure ?'

'Your Honour's fame for wisdom,' answered Manilal, 'has reached me, a poor graduate upon the threshold of my active life.'

'My influence in the Government service has been exhausted on behalf of my own kindred,' said the great one.

'All I require is counsel on a subject which absorbs my mind.'

'If that is so, speak on !' The First-class Magistrate (retired) resumed the mouthpiece of his hookah. The gurgle of the water in the bowl was heard. His massive face expressed a vague contentment. Manilal told his story, seeing through the rails of the veranda a strip of waste land with some bushes stretching to the river-bank. A portion of the river-bed was visible, a grey expanse on which a narrow stream of water glanced and twinkled in the

sunlight. Beyond, the trees and temples of the city rose up like a battlemented wall against a sky of pearl. The scene was in his eyes while he described his case, and when he had done speaking it came home to him. It seemed more friendly than the foreground where he sat.

He said : ' I seek instruction in the heart of politics.'

The First-class Magistrate (retired) was smoking peacefully. His countenance assumed a jocular expression, almost derogatory in so great a man.

' To understand the inwardness of politics one must enter the Government service,' he observed at length. ' By the time one is created Rao Bahadur, if one lives so long, one has become a perfect master of the science. One knows which rope to pull for what result.'

' I seek the inner meaning,' Manilal protested. ' The rest is all illusion.'

The Rao Bahadur chuckled. ' That is true. The inner meaning of it all is selfishness. It is everyone for himself. Remember that, and pay the tribute due to a superior egotism.' The sage with right hand indicated a profound salaam and then went through the action of presenting money delicately. ' That is the answer to the riddle, my young friend. He who bears that in mind will make his way. The end is rest—such rest as I enjoy. The problem is more simple than you think.'

' And yet the world is complicated and politics is the science of the world's events.'

' The world is vanity,' replied the Rao Bahadur. ' Seek not to serve the peoples : they will not reward you. Serve those who will reward you. Serve yourself.'

Manilal became aware that he was wasting thoughts of beauty on a man without ideals. He thanked the Rao Bahadur for his condescension and withdrew. As he recrossed the bridge into the town, the sun was near his setting. He suddenly remembered that a three days' fast confronted him—a family affair which could not be evaded. It began just after sunset. He hurried towards his lodging where his wife, he knew, would have a meal prepared for him.

For three days after that he was prevented by his fast and the observances connected with it from active prosecution of his quest. He spent the time between his room which overlooked a street of shops, much crowded in the daytime, and the precincts

of an ancient temple by the river-bank, his wife attending on him like an acolyte. On the fourth day, being free once more, he visited the shop of Shamdas and reported his adventure with the First-class Magistrate (retired.)

'The man is old and has associated all his life with Government officials. Naturally he is cynical and weary,' was the view of Shamdas. 'I told you from the first that he could not be called seditious, and public men who cannot be so called are always either rascals or dejected. To-day I have a new suggestion for you. A meeting will be held this afternoon in Kagra Bagh to hear a famous Muslim speaker from the North. They say he is the greatest Urdu orator. You understand that language: go and hear him.'

'Yes, I will go,' said Manilal with pleasure.

He sat outside the shop of Shamdas, in the shade of the baobab till it wanted but ten minutes of the time appointed for the meeting, when, seeing Shamdas still detained by business, he set off alone. His way lay through the crowded city streets, and it disgusted him to notice how each group or unit pushed its separate way in callous disregard of all the others. This selfishness or blindness gave him sad reflections. Then all at once he became conscious of a rising tide among the wayfarers which seemed to sweep them off their feet and bear them all in one direction. Men, animals, and carts which still maintained a separate purpose became as islands around which it swirled and eddied. They seemed half afraid. It was the indraught of the public meeting. Manilal was caught in it, and unresisting, before he knew that it was tending where he wished to go.

'On what subject will he speak to us?' he asked a neighbour in the press.

'On politics, of course,' was the unhesitating answer.

Then Manilal found himself upon the brink of what resembled a huge shallow tank, of which the ground could not be seen for seated people, while the edges were all occupied by standing crowds. Windows and roofs of all the houses within sight were also crowded with spectators. The day's fierce heat was past; the light grew mellow. The multitude, so full of colour and restricted movement, resembled a huge flower-bed touched by a light breeze. The murmur rising from it seemed the hum of bees. He stood a moment, wrapt in admiration. But the steadily inflowing tide still urged him on. At the end of the enclosure farthest from him was a

kind of stage, with plush-upholstered chairs and couches on it and an awning. It struck Manilal that if he wished to hear the orator he must get near the platform, so he dropped into the body of the meeting and delicately picked his way amid the seated throng. Some volunteers in khaki uniforms and fezes were arranging people and, accosting one of them, Manilal was soon accommodated near the platform.

He sat with all that vast assembly, patiently for hours, yet no one came. The sun was setting when the leader of the volunteers stood forth and, flourishing a telegram, announced: 'Maulana was delayed. He missed the train. But now he will be here directly.'

A general murmur of acceptance hailed the tidings. No one moved. Twilight came and with it temple bells and the muezzin's cry. The many Muslims who were in the meeting went to prayer, returning in about ten minutes to their places. The volunteers hung lighted lanterns on the stage, making its expectant emptiness the more apparent. And then, at last, when night had settled in, there came from the far outskirts of the throng a wild, inspiring shout: 'Allahu Akbar!' It rose from point to point until the welkin rang with it, and then a group of men in loose white raiment were seen to mount the platform with the help of volunteers. One of them, a bearded man whose stature towered, had a scarlet crescent sewn upon the high white cap above his brow. Again the cry 'Allahu Akbar!' rent the air, and then dead silence fell upon the multitude. Manilal was conscious of a kind of exultation which was altogether new in his experience of life. The dull preliminary speeches failed to damp that ardour, and with the first tones of the great man's voice it was intensified. He uttered words which came as light to Manilal.

'Our enemies,' he said, 'appear to blame us because, they say, we bring religion into politics. With us religion is no mere observance reserved for one day in the week; it covers, animates, ennobles all the avocations of man's daily life. It is man's guidance. How can it, therefore, be apart from politics, on which the welfare of mankind so much depends? You all have heard our cry "Allahu Akbar!"; but do you know its meaning? "God is greater!"—greater than the pride of men, the might of governments. His law is changeless and His judgment is for all alike. He has no favourites. We Muslims are His servants, and we cannot possibly transgress His law at the behest of any earthly government.

They can do their worst to us in punishment; it will not turn us from our purpose by the fraction of an inch; and in the end it is the worse for them. For God is greater, and everybody who acknowledges the sovereignty of God, no matter what his race or colour, class or form of worship, is, in fact, our brother. The goal, the judgment, and the law are one for all. This is the one essential of true human progress—by which I mean not the progress of one section of God's human creatures at the expense and by the degradation of another section, but the progress of mankind as a whole—this recognition of God's universal sovereignty. When this essential Unity is recognised, and not till then, will man's adventure in this world approach success. How say they that religion has no part in politics? . . .'

He spoke for full three hours, with unabated ardour, but Manilal was inattentive after that, envisaging the sky with all its stars, the night of mystery, rather than the lighted stage, and its inhabitants. The multitude had vanished from his consciousness; he sat alone, and was surprised when the meeting closed—as he thought, suddenly—to find himself a unit of so great a throng. Lamps had been hung up on the outskirts of the crowd, and volunteers held lanterns up to mark the exit. Manilal drifted with the stream till it thinned out, allowing him to take his own direction, when he went straight home. Passing through the room in which his wife and child were sleeping peacefully, he went and sat upon the little balcony above the street, now full of darkness underneath the stars and silent save for quarrels of marauding dogs. His quest was widened beyond all horizons. He would not now have shown his purpose to his college principal any more than he would have sought the counsel of an Englishman upon the subject of his three days' fast. He thought now of his parents in a country town of Maharashtra, and of how his mother took him on a pilgrimage when he was still a child. He recalled his early efforts as a Brahmachari, how he had been taught to hold his breath till death confronted him. He remembered a bright picture of Sri Krishna playing on his flute to gods and animals, which had been the fascination of his childhood. Once more he was in tune with the emotions of those early days as he had never been since he began his English studies.

Next day, the first thing that he did to celebrate his soul's revival was to invite Shamdas of the shop to dinner at his lodging. Manilal and his wife, with some assistance from their child of

four years old, prepared a meal of many vegetable dishes, with the usual rice and curry and a choice of chutneys. Before the meal, both Manilal and Shamdas took a bath and changed their clothes in favour of a white shirt and a *dhoti*. Each sat down cross-legged on a little square of board, set like an island on the bare and well-washed floor; each turned back the sleeve from his right arm and then attacked the food disposed upon a tray before him. The wife and child of Manilal stood by in waiting. Shamdas ate all the vegetables which were set before him, drank all the soups, and gobbled a great heap of rice and lentils. Then he drank some water, sat up straight and looked at Manilal. They both rose and went out to the place of washing, whence, having cleaned their hands and mouths, they passed on to the balcony, until the lady, having eaten in her turn and washed, came out and joined them.

Then Manilal began to talk about his new ideas, adopting for his text the words of the great Urdu speaker. Shamdas at first made some objections, saying that the words embodied Muslim and not Hindu doctrine, that the speaker, though a patriotic Indian, was a Muslim first and, like all Muslims, wanted to make converts. But as Manilal proceeded to enlarge his meaning the shopkeeper became as one transfixed.

Manilal spoke of the Eternal Unity which is—which must be—somewhere beyond all diversity, in terms so eloquent that they entranced his simple hearers. He said:

‘I see a lamp, upon the glass of which the men of old have painted pictures for remembrance. But people gaze upon the pictures and forget the light. They think of it as far away, beyond the pictures, not as the blessing which enables them to see at all. Thus the light is here but the people are, to all intents, immersed in darkness, because they see the lamp as a restricted, distant object, and are unconscious of the light it sheds for them to use. Now full perception of the light has come to me, and more than ever I would study politics. It is a task of paramount importance to our country, since it would break the spell of Western education and restore the glory of religion. The call, as I have said, has come to me, and every moment that I spend in idleness is now my shame.’

His wife sighed deeply. Shamdas sat silent, gasping, for a while. Then he too, sighed, more vehemently, and exclaimed:

‘I confess that till to-day I fancied you the victim of a fever of the brain; but now I kiss your feet, for I perceive that you are

one of those who come from time to time to raise the people. It is not for me to reason with you. I must ask your blessing on poor men like me.'

'I am nothing but a seeker,' Manilal protested.

'I look at what you will be,' answered Shamdas. He then turned to the wife of Manilal and asked: 'And what think you, my lady?'

'I am his first disciple,' she replied.

Encouraged by such warm expressions, Manilal went on to speak of future plans. His notion was to seek the countenance and the advice of men renowned for sanctity all over India. He would take his wife and child to his parental home and then go forth upon his quest, unburdened. Shamdas approved of these arrangements, and when he had gone Manilal began to pack up his belongings.

Then Manilal lost count of time. *He took his wife and child by train, in third-class carriages, to the town among the mountains where his father lived. His parents were astonished at his transformation from a listless, rather supercilious student who despised the country life to one who took delight in every phase of it. His wife described the manner of the change, and all the womenfolk acclaimed it as miraculous. When his father and his uncles asked him in a guarded manner whether he had joined the Nationalist ranks, he called their notice to his English clothes, and said 'I shall discard them on the day of full enlightenment.'*

He then set forth upon his quest. In humble ways he journeyed northward to the Himalayas and back to the sacred cities on the Ganges bank, in search of men renowned for holy wisdom. One whom he consulted, hearing the word 'politics,' would answer nothing but the word 'illusion,' which he repeated often with a comfortable smile. Another stated that the light which Manilal was seeking radiated from his (the Swami's) very navel, which was, in fact, the true soul-centre of the Universe. Others assured him of success, but asked for money. Some spoke of sacred trees or herbs or stones, and many prescribed bathing in the Ganges. All praised the life of contemplation, which they claimed to lead, as the sure way to spiritual progress. Some spoke kindly to him, others were extremely rude; and none were of the slightest help to him in his pursuit. But Manilal did not despair, for in the villages the common people gathered round to hear him speak, and in the cities he was honoured by the college students. All

his admirers told him to consult one man, a famous saint and seer in Gujarat. It was a long way off and Manilal had now no money. Obligated to beg his way, he could not hasten, and, as he felt that every day he gained in fame and value as a personality, it rather pleased him to forecast that he would come before that saint and seer at last as a congenial soul, well known and long expected.

In the neighbourhood of Hardwar on the Ganges, a holy place of which the manners had disgusted him, he had a strange encounter. He had been given a lift in a bullock-cart up to a certain point upon the road, from whence he made his way on foot along a bridle-path. He had a paper parcel of dry food, and was looking for a comfortable shady place in which to make his meal, when he espied a woman sitting underneath a mango tree. Her face was hidden in her hands; her attitude expressed the utmost woe. In pity at the sight he sat down near her in the shade and asked what ailed her. She looked up in alarm, but his respectable appearance seemed to reassure her, for, giving up her first idea of flight, she burst out weeping uncontrollably. She was a widow of high caste, still quite a girl.

Manilal allayed her grief with soothing words and bade her share his food. Then by degrees she told him all her story. Her husband died soon after she was married, leaving her a widow in his father's house; her own folk being far away beyond the hills. Her husband's people made a slave of her, treating her as an enemy whom fate had placed within their power. A brother of her husband had made overtures to her, and when she refused had slandered her before his parents, who at length decided to send her to the service of a temple in the town of Hardwar. Her persecutor had been given orders to convey her thither. She had prepared for death, for he was hateful to her. But by the favour of the gods she had found an opportunity to escape before it came to that extremity.

'When did this happen?' questioned Manilal.

'An hour or two ago—this very morning. I ran and walked till I could go no more, and then sank down in this lone place, resolved to die.'

'And here your troubles end,' said Manilal. 'I am a man under a vow, so you are safe with me.'

The girl surveyed him for the first time curiously.

'You do not look at all like that,' she said. 'If you were a Sadhu or a pilgrim you would not wear foreign clothes.'

'I am a seeker after truth, though of another pattern. You are my human sister. Whither go you?'

'I wish to find my mother,' said the girl, and therewith she began to weep anew. She could not tell him clearly where her mother lived.

'Well, let us walk together,' he replied.

Her tears by then were dried. She smiled at Manilal and sang a little to herself as they advanced. They reached a wider road and, after walking for a mile, were picked up by a friendly carter going to the town, which they reached just after sunset. After washing at a public fountain, they ate the little which remained of Manilal's provision, and slept beneath a shelter in a kind of park.

This girl who had no claim on him nor any portion in his life, who spoke when spoken to, but followed faithfully and tended to his comfort in a multitude of little ways, was just the comrade for the life which Manilal was forced to lead. She had a store of songs to cheer the way, and when they had no money she would beg for him. But as time passed he grew uneasy, finding the thought of her intrude too often in his meditations, and that to gaze on her disturbed the currents of his blood. Occasionally he was even tempted to forget his quest.

'Whither are we going? Tell me!' she inquired, one night when they were prepared to sleep upon the mighty plinth before a temple gate, high up for fear of snakes. The temple towers bulged above the walls behind them, like monstrous ant-heaps in the starry night. Below them, in the shadow of some houses, they could see a group of turbaned men around a fire. The wood-smoke perfume mingled with the scent of jasmine from some flowers picked by the roadside, in her hair. The scent was an appeal more intimate than any speech.

'I am going to Bombay, my sister,' he replied with studied coolness.

'What for?' she asked.

He would not answer. He had given her the reason many times. It was perverse of her to ask again as if she did not know. She took no notice, but went on:

'You are a seeker of the truth, but, by my life, you seek it in strange ways, my brother. Did you not tell me that the truth is happiness?'

'It is: the highest happiness.'

'The answers to some questions are in other lives. To seek them in this life is waste of energy.' For the first time in their intercourse she nestled close to Manilal and touched his hand.

'This life has questions which are answered easily. This life has happiness if one would only grasp it.'

Manilal sat deathly still, vibrating like a lyre. He seemed to be transported to a mighty distance from which he heard his own reply, in tones so cold as to belie his very nature: 'You are my sister.' Gently he withdrew. He felt that he had passed through anguish worse than death.

She only sighed, and spoke no more that night.

The last part of their journey was performed by train, Manilal having obtained some money from a friend. The throng and bustle of the city stunned them both on arrival. They found their way with difficulty to the dwelling-place of a relation of Manilal's, a merchant, in the quarter called Bhuleshwar, near the shrine of Mombadevi. There the girl, who had been sulky on the journey, asked for a loan of money, enough to take her to her native place. The merchant gave it gladly, and she set out once again, Manilal going to the terminus to see her off. His heart was sad at parting from her, but his soul rejoiced.

Returning to the shop, he found his kinsman taking tea with several persons who seemed to Manilal to eye him curiously as he joined them. No sooner was he seated than the merchant urged him to tell them the whole story of his wanderings. That he did, and then proceeded to enlarge upon his vision of the waking East revealing to mankind the soul in politics.

His hearers were astonished at his eloquence and at the passionate belief his words conveyed. They looked at one another and one said 'It is quite true. The Europeans are devoid of real insight, and we, by copying their inattention, lose our soul.'

Another flung up both his hands exclaiming, 'And this is the result of English education!'

'I think it is the ultimate result,' said Manilal.

He told them of his coming visit to the saint and seer whom all men revered, and then withdrew into the house to meditate, sitting cross-legged in a room quite bare of furniture or ornament, save for a solitary coloured picture on one wall. At sunset his relation came and said:

'I have received a letter from our uncle Devji. It contains ill news. That is the reason why we kept you talking at such length: to fix your thoughts on things which do not die.'

'Someone is dead then? Tell me all,' said Manilal.

'Our native place is ravaged by an epidemic, and all those in your father's house have perished.'

Manilal sat in silence, seeming petrified. At length he murmured : ' Now my mind is one,' meaning that, having loosed all earthly ties, he was entirely at the service of the spirit moving him.

He knew all the religious duties which devolved on him as the survivor, and set about performing them methodically. The merchant was astonished at his fortitude. But Manilal was conscious of the crown of life at hand for him. The hope of his approaching visit to the saint uplifted him above the consciousness of grief.

His kinsman when he knew the tenor of his thoughts upheld him, saying : ' Soon you will be consoled in the affection of that master mind. He will certainly appoint you to command some mighty effort for the nation's good.' And when the time for the momentous journey came, he went with Manilal to the railway station, bought his ticket for him, and even asked his fellow travellers to be kind enough to see that he alighted at the proper place.

Sparks blown across the windows of the flying train engaged the eyes of Manilal through half the night. He thought of the approaching meeting with the saint as an apotheosis which he had deserved by right of vigils, pilgrimages, and privations, and by rejection of the pleasures of this life. The last terrific blow which had befallen him seemed evidence of his approaching triumph. He fell asleep at last, and dreamed. He saw Sri Krishna playing on his flute with gods and animals around him, just as in the picture which had hung upon the wall at home. His wife and child were there. So also was the young girl-widow who had cheered his wandering. All were enveloped in a light of happiness. He heard a sweet voice saying : ' We all are nothing, and the light is all.' The words gave such a thrill of joy to Manilal that he was quite transported, floating in the happy air ; when something thrust itself against his side, and he awoke to find his neighbour, an old bannia, nudging him. It was daylight and the train was drawing near his destination. He did not quite shake off the glamour of his dream until the sun's rays smote him as he walked out from the station-building.

The saint and seer had his abode outside the city in a grove of fruit-trees on the river bank. Manilal was preparing to tramp thither when one of whom he asked the way informed him that the saint was at that moment in the town, naming a house at which he could be found till noon.

It was a fine house like a palace, in wide grounds. A crowd

of people of the poorer sort hung round the gate. Manilal passed through them and went in, across the compound and up a broad stone stairway leading to a handsome porch. At the top of the steps he saw some people standing and approached them. They pointed to a door before which stood a man clad all in white, who, seeing Manilal, came forward and inquired his business with much courtesy. Hearing that he craved an audience of the saint, he asked him to be good enough to wait a minute. Then he went into the room. During that time of waiting Manilal's excitement of anticipation reached the highest pitch. At length the white-clad usher reappeared and whispered 'Come!' and Manilal was shown into the presence of the one man in the world whose praise he coveted.

He saw a little brown and wizened figure clad in nothing but a loin-cloth, sitting on the floor, surrounded by both men and women of distinguished mien, all wearing Indian dress, which made him feel abashed. The saint vouchsafed a smile of greeting, and beckoned him to sit beside him. Manilal bent down and touched his feet, but sat at a respectful distance, facing him.

'You wish to speak to me?' inquired the saint benignly.

'I seek your blessing and approval for my quest. I have long been your devout disciple,' answered Manilal.

Now it was the badge of the disciples of that saint that all their clothes should be of Indian homespun, nothing else, and of the simplest kind. There was no point on which the teacher dwelt with more insistence. Therefore he smiled when Manilal, in English clothes, described himself as his devout disciple, in pity for the young man's ignorance. Moreover, he was daily pestered by young people who expressed the wish to follow him, but were not prepared to make the sacrifices he demanded of his followers. He thought that Manilal was one of these. And Manilal, for his part, had so deified that saintly man that he never dreamt that explanations were required from him. He thought the saint must know by intuition all his aims and history, and what was passing at that moment in his thoughts.

'After much seeking, many wanderings,' he said, 'I ask for leave to study at your sacred feet.'

'What is the subject you propose to study?'

'Politics.'

The saint cried 'Eh?' and looked at Manilal a moment as if he judged him to be utterly demented. If there was one thing this great man abhorred and taught his pupils strenuously to eschew, that thing was politics, as Europeans understand the term.

It was the game, he used to say, of cynical and wicked rulers, persons destitute of all religion or restraint of decency, who form Satanic governments to crush the growth of goodness in mankind. He was amused and shocked at the young man's effrontery. 'I do not teach that subject,' he replied with studied gentleness. 'All my disciples have abjured such foolish and misleading studies. Why do you, calling yourself my *devout* disciple'—laying a playful emphasis upon the adjective—'come to me wearing clothes of English fashion and material?'

'I mean to change them shortly,' faltered Manilal.

'That is the very first step to be taken. Then, having changed your garments, change your heart by purifying your desires and views, until the very thought of politics disgusts you. Try that, and come to me again in six months' time.'

The saint saluted in the Hindu fashion, putting up his hands with palms together as in prayer, with great courtesy; his smile was kind, and every word that he had said had been instinct with kindness. Yet Manilal felt just as if he had been cursed where he expected blessing. He managed somehow to regain the door. The crowd of humble seekers at the compound gate waiting to see and, if it might be, touch the saint when he came out, seemed to be conscious of his plight and watching him. He felt as one cast out from the abode of bliss. He found himself soon after at the railway-station, waiting for a train which seemed intolerably long in coming. It came at length and he pressed in among a crowd of people.

Six months! The saint's injunction was, for him, derisive. It meant that he was not what he had so long felt himself to be, that he was an impostor in the estimation of the saint. His wife and child, his parents were all dead. The young girl-widow had departed. He was all alone. And, worst of all, the light was gone from him.

He had not tasted food for forty hours, and he was minded never to touch food again. The light which he had followed with such rapture and belief, which had consoled him for the loss of all his dear ones, was gone; and he was left a creature bruised and wounded by the shafts of fate, humiliated to the dust.

Suddenly the vision of his sleep the night before recurred to him; he heard again the voice of music saying: 'We all are nothing, and the light is all.' It might have been Sri Krishna speaking—Sri Krishna whom he thought of as the prophet of his race. Surely the light was there if he could only win forth

from the pall of darkness which now covered him. The darkness was illusion, but the light was real. His fault was he had thought too much of human personalities, deeming them of power to help him in his search for truth. Really, as the vision told him, they were nothing in conjunction with the light. The journey to Bombay was like a fever-dream.

He came again to his relation's house. The servant told him that the *Seth* had gone to Poona, but had left the key of his abode for Manilal to use. He took the key and went upstairs. The room he entered first was dim and choked with merchandise. He went into a farther room and looked around him. All at once he gave a cry. Upon the wall which caught the window's light, there was a picture of Sri Krishna, blue and radiant, playing on his magic flute to gods and animals. The light was there, the happy light which he had seen in dream. The picture was the same which had adorned his childhood's home.

The shame of his position overwhelmed him. He had been rejected by the wisest and the best, he was an impostor in the eyes of men, in his own eyes a failure. Oh, to escape from this abasement! The light was there; the Power of which the Muslim orator had spoken, which was One for all, was all around him; it was close at hand, but he, because of his confinement in this harassed and dishonoured body, could not reach it. There was a way. His present life was rendered worthless by the saint's decree. He could not bear to live in this condition. He could not bear to face the wonder of his kinsman. There was a way, legitimate for one like him, the way of resolution, not the coward's way.

The sense of failure and rejection fell from him. He went back to the outer door and locked it, and shut all the windows. Then he returned and spread a mattress on the floor, took down the picture of Sri Krishna from the wall and sat down cross-legged holding it against his breast, his back against the wall. He faced the lighted window, and, as he gazed his last upon that earthly radiance, a peacock came and perched upon the ledge outside—a bird uncommon in the city, and esteemed auspicious. It seemed to be the centre of a blaze of light. His life was rendered vain unless he sacrificed it. It needed but an effort, and he knew the way. Clutching the picture with both hands, he held his breath.

He had been dead twelve hours when his relation, coming back from Poona, found him sitting with the picture on his lap as if displaying it.

LITERARY ACROSTICS.

THE Editor of THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE offers prizes to the value of at least £3 to the most successful solvers of this series of four Literary Acrostics. There will also be consolation prizes, two or more in number: the winners of these will be entitled to choose books to the value of £1 from Mr. Murray's catalogue. And, further, every month a similar prize of books will be awarded to the sender of the correct solution that is opened first.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 19.

(The Third of the Series.)

'What hast thou found in the spring to follow?'

'Hail to thee, blithe spirit!

Bird thou never wert.'

1. 'Generally, men ought to find the difference
between —— and bitterness.'
2. 'I have perhaps some shallow spirit of judgement;
But in these nice sharp quilllets of the law,
Good faith, I am no wiser than a daw.'
3. 'Then shook the hills with thunder riven,
Then rush'd the steed to battle driven,
And louder than the bolts of heaven,
Far flash'd the red ——.'
4. 'Conquerors thanked the Gods,
With —— chaplets crowned.'
5. '——hath a beaming eye,
But no one knows for whom it beameth.'
6. 'As moths will hover round a candle,
So hovered he about her shrine.'
7. 'He never came a —— too soon,
Nor brought too long a day.'

RULES.

1. Only one answer may be sent to each light.
2. Every correct light and upright will score one point.
3. With his answer every solver must send the coupon that is printed above 'Book Notes' on a later page.
4. At the foot of his answer every solver must write his pseudonym (consisting of one word), and nothing else. His name and address should be written at the back.
5. Solvers must on no account write either the quotations or the references on the same paper as their answers. It is not necessary, or even desirable, to send them at all.
6. Solvers who write a second letter, to correct a previous answer, must send the complete solution as they wish it, and not merely state the desired alteration.
7. Answers to Acrostic No. 19 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE, 50A Albemarle Street, London, W. 1, and must arrive not later than September 20.

ANSWER TO No. 18.

1.	T	rut	H
2.	H	er	O
3.	O	verthre	W
4.	M	arian	A
5.	A	rthu	R
6.	S	hiel	D

PROEM: *The Revenge*, i.

LIGHTS:

1. *The Grandmother.*
2. *The Charge of the Light Brigade.*
3. *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington*, vi.
4. *Mariana.*
5. *Morte d'Arthur.*
6. *The Lady of Shalott*, iii.

Acrostic No. 17 ('Tolls Knell'): To this acrostic 419 solvers sent in their answers: 398 of them were correct, 6 were incorrect, and 15 did not observe the rules—either there was no pseudonym, or no coupon was enclosed, or else references or quotations were written out with the solution on the same paper.

The first answer opened and found correct was from 'Senectus,' who wins the monthly prize. Mr. C. G. Busby, Glenthorne, Eastbourne, is entitled to choose books from Mr. Murray's catalogue, to the value of £1.

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